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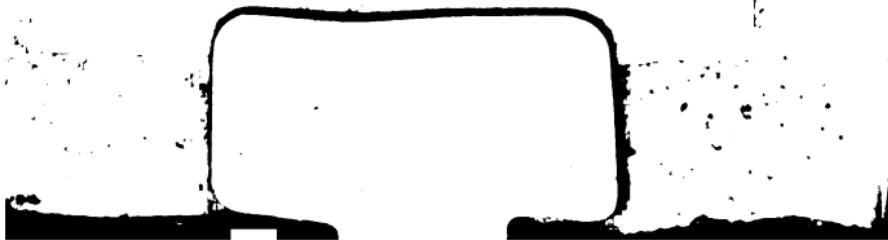
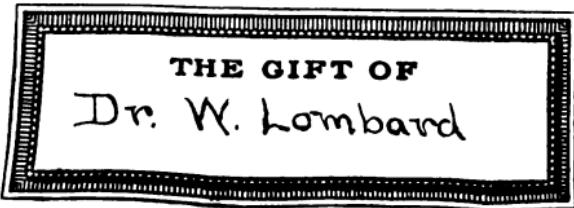
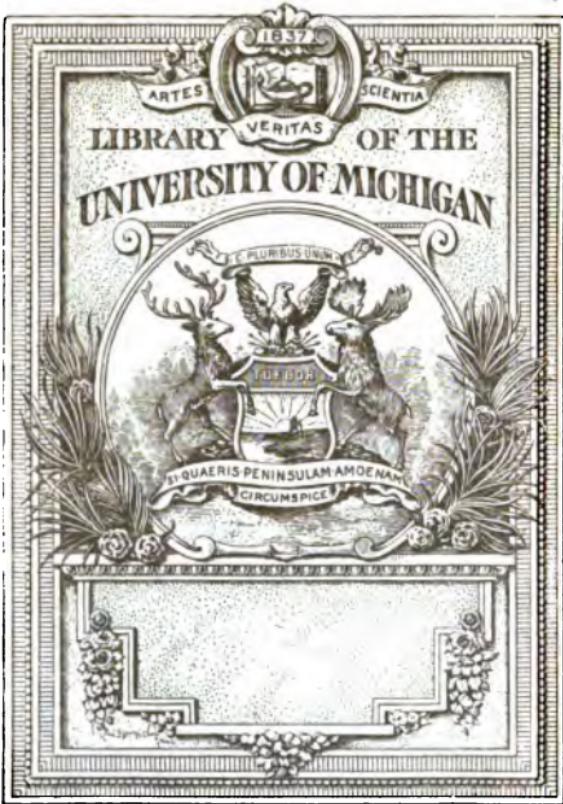
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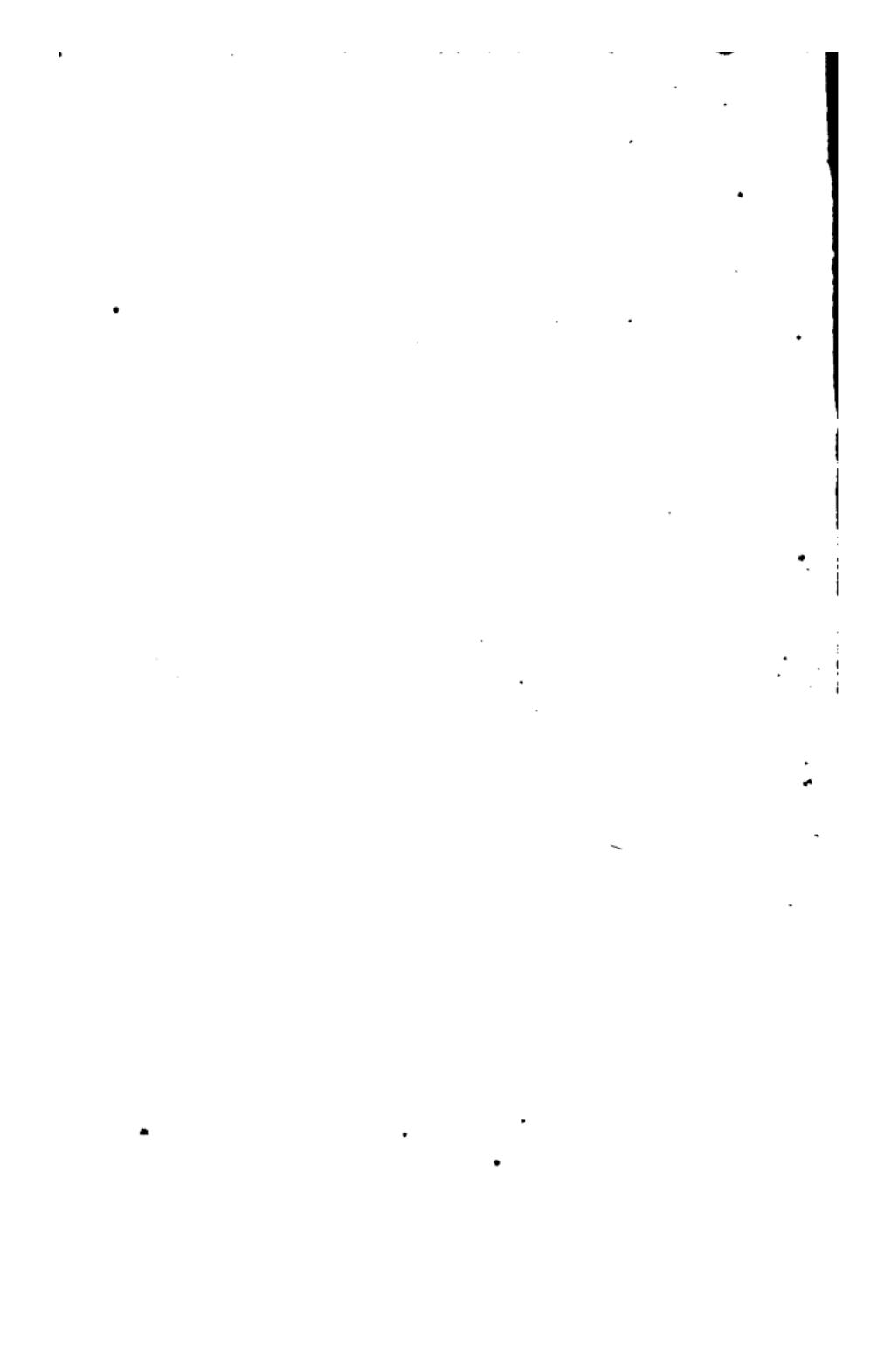
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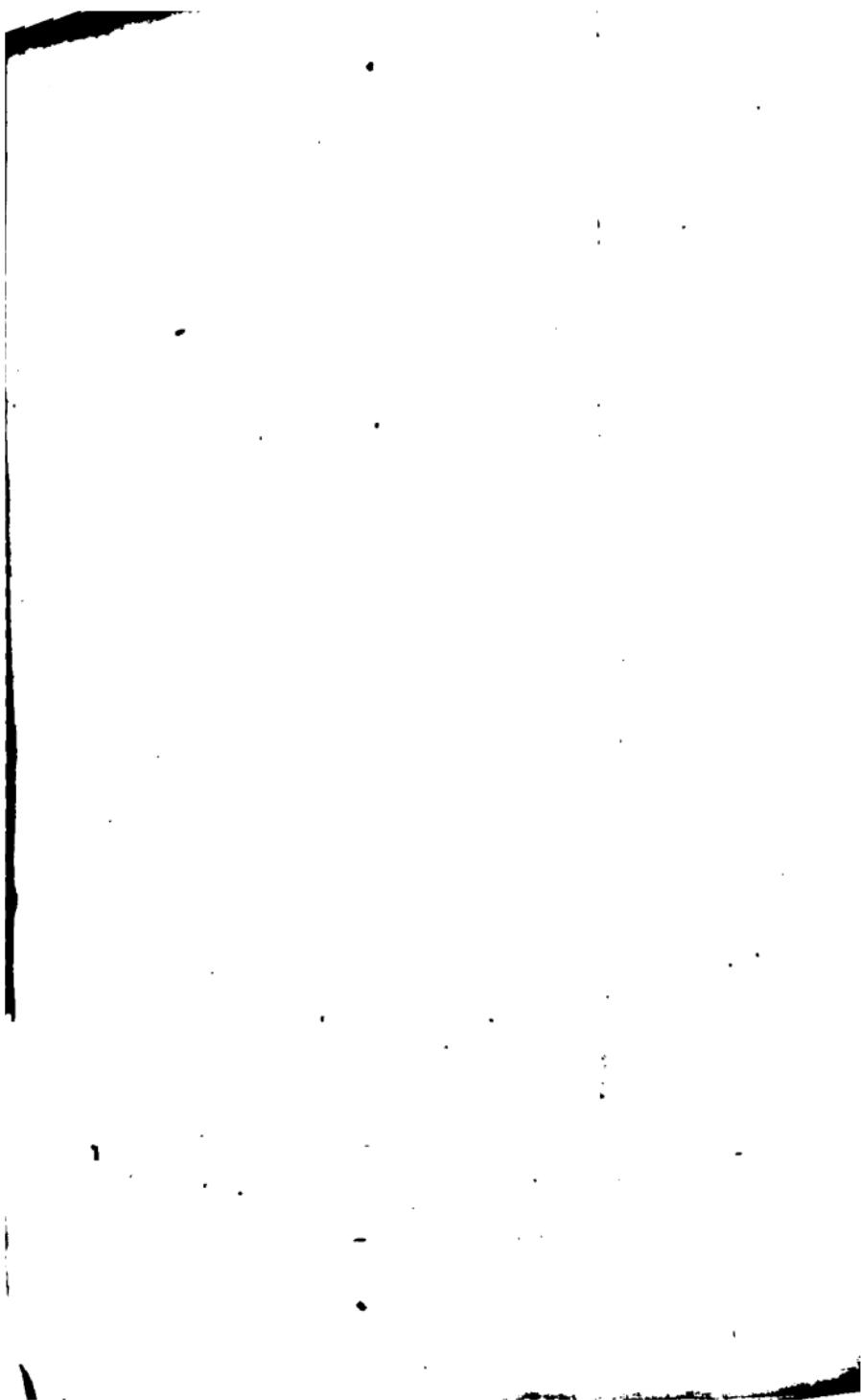


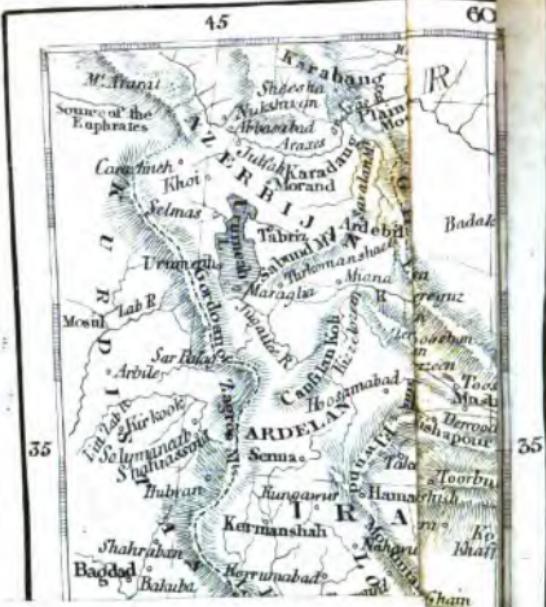
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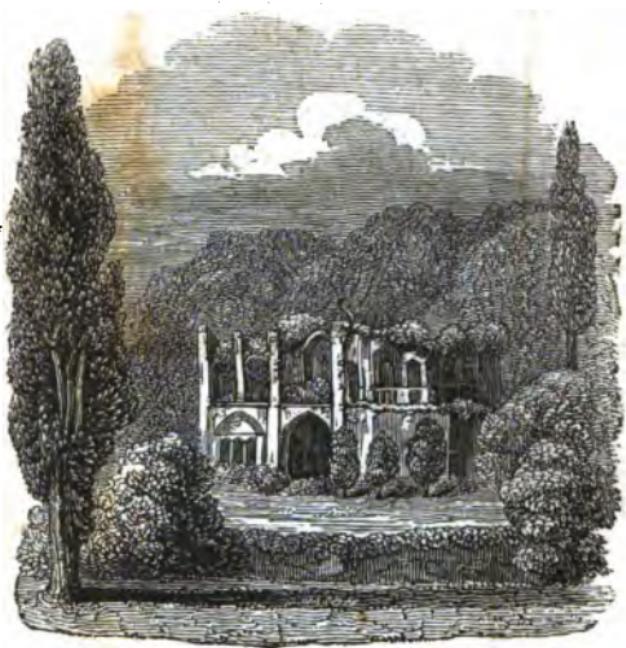






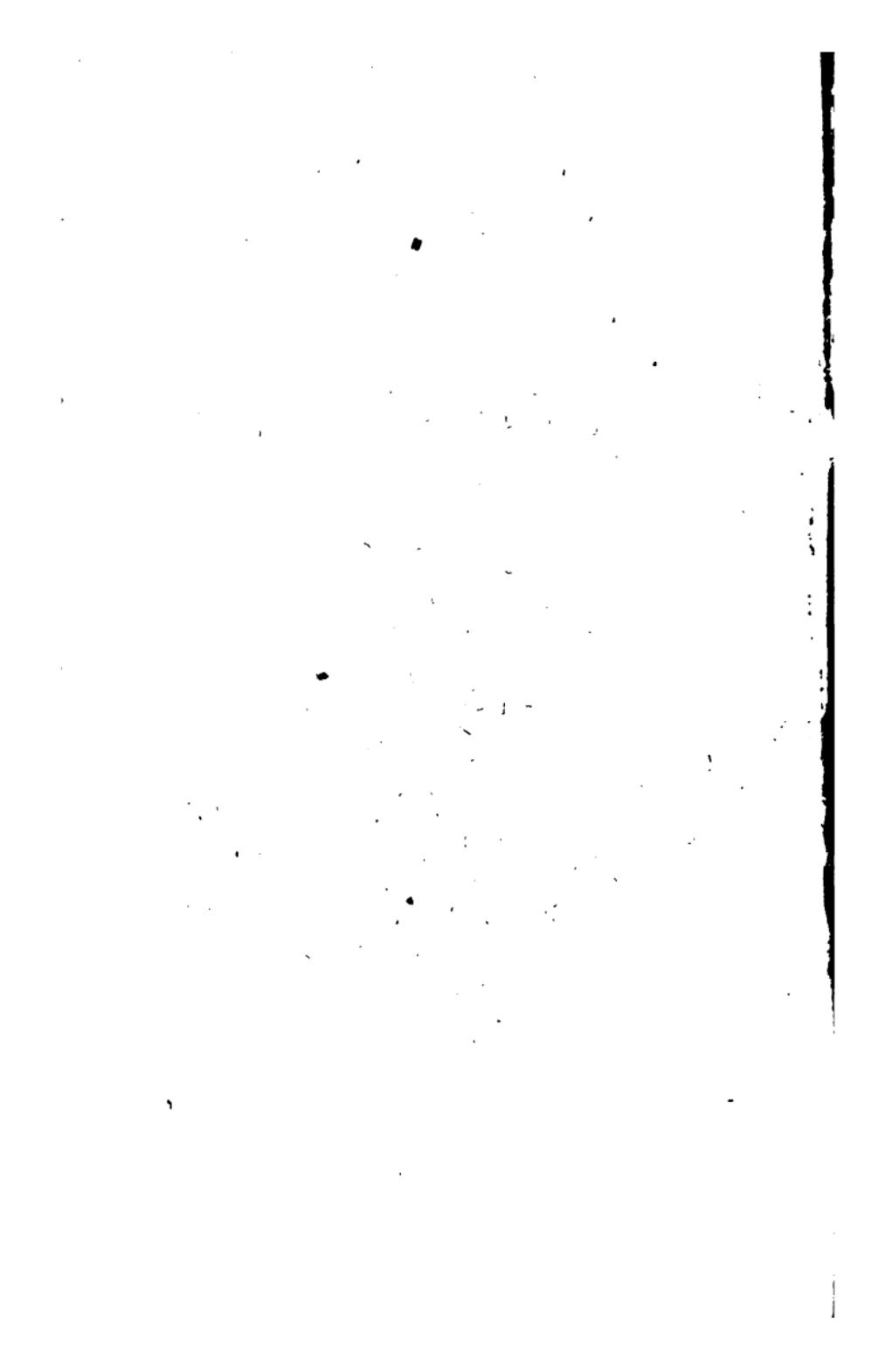


P E R S I A.



HARPER & BROTHERS—CLIFF-STREET.

1 8 3 4.



HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE

ACCOUNT, OF

P E R S I A,

FROM THE

EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME :

WITH

A DETAILED VIEW OF ITS RESOURCES, GOVERNMENT,
POPULATION, NATURAL HISTORY, AND THE CHARACTER
OF ITS INHABITANTS, PARTICULARLY
OF THE WANDERING TRIBES :

INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF

AFGHANISTAN AND BELOOCHISTAN.

BY
JAMES B. FRASER, ESQ.,

*Author of "Travels in Khorasan," "A Tour through the Hindoo-Koosh,"
&c. &c.*

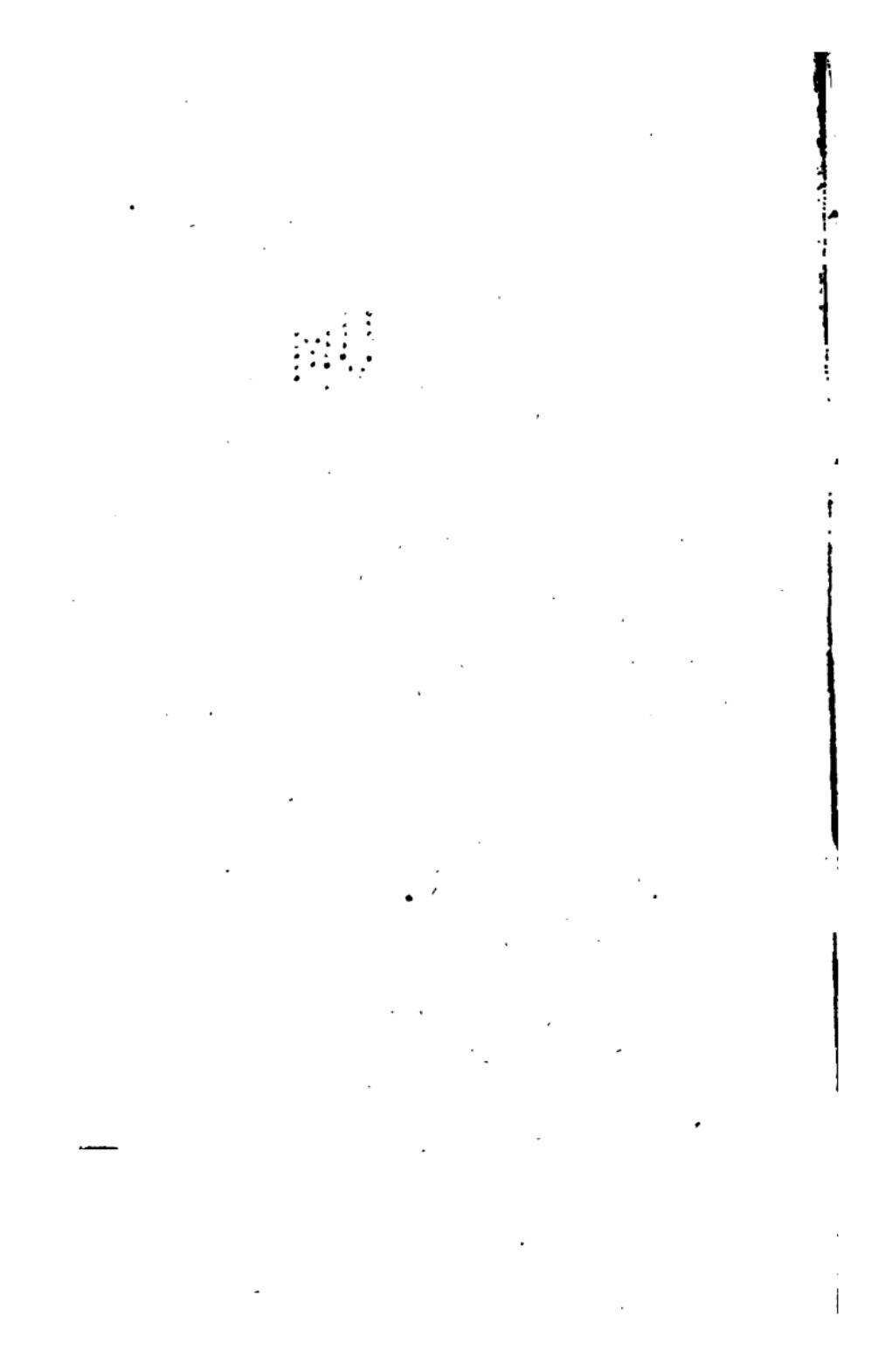
ILLUSTRATED BY A MAP AND SEVERAL ENGRAVINGS.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,

NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.

1834,



P R E F A C E.

In undertaking to describe so extensive and celebrated a region as the Persian empire, the author is by no means insensible to the difficulty of the task on which he enters. The subject is wide and intricate, while the sources of information are frequently imperfect or obscure ; but it has been his study, by adopting a distinct arrangement, and by consulting the best authorities, to present his readers with a correct and complete picture of that interesting portion of Western Asia.

His personal acquaintance with many parts of the country has afforded him material assistance in describing its aspect, productions, and inhabitants ; and he has availed himself of the observations of the greater number of modern travellers, both to correct his own opinions, and to supply additional facts.

The advantage of this actual knowledge has been especially important in constructing the map ; and, it is proper to remark, a very considerable difference will be found between the positions of many of the principal places, as given in that now sub-

mitted to the public, compared with all other geographical delineations of Persia. These corrections have been made in accordance with a series of astronomical observations taken by the author, the details of which may be found in his "Travels in Khorasan," and "On the Banks of the Caspian Sea;" and every precaution has been adopted to lay down the whole of the countries described in this work with the greatest possible accuracy. The route which the author pursued is distinctly marked, and may be satisfactory to some readers, as showing the districts to which such of his descriptions as are founded on personal survey more particularly apply.

The fountains from which the ancient history of Persia is derived are generally well known; but, in drawing from them on this occasion, the most earnest endeavours have been made to elucidate the subject, by examining into the opinions of every distinguished writer down to the present time. The greater part of the narrative, subsequently to the Mohammedan invasion, is taken from the pages of Sir John Malcolm, whose volumes are now everywhere regarded as a standard authority in this department.

In his account of the religion of Zoroaster, the author has trusted principally to three sources: First, To the works of Anquetil du Perron, whose persevering zeal has accomplished a translation of those curious relics of Magian lore entitled the Zendavesta, and explored every source of ancient and modern literature calculated to throw light upon the

subject ; secondly, To the writings of the ingenious Abbé Foucher, who has examined it with great critical ability ; and, thirdly, To the less voluminous, but most perspicuous and conclusive disquisitions of Mr. William Erskine, who, in addition to his accurate knowledge of European learning, has brought to the investigation an intimate acquaintance with oriental languages, and the advantage of a familiar intercourse with some very intelligent Parsee doctors. The labours of these three gentlemen appear to have exhausted the subject, so far as materials for inquiry or conjecture are considered.

In describing the antiquities of Persia, the author has corrected and enlarged his own observations by the accounts of other travellers ; among whom, Chardin and Niebuhr at an earlier period, and Sir Robert Ker Porter and Morier in our own day, will be found to give the amplest and most accurate details.

In all that relates to the nature and resources of the government, the classification and character of the people, to the wandering tribes, and, in short, the substance of the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters, the author has not trusted to his own resources alone, but has converted to his use many original materials, furnished upon the spot by persons in every way qualified to afford the best information. For this reason he believes that these chapters will be found to contain a considerable mass of new and very interesting matter.

For the account of Asghanistan, he is principally indebted to the valuable work of Mr. Elphinstone,

the correctness of which, so far as he had it in his power to inquire, was in every instance confirmed. The latter part of the history, from the dethronement of Shah Sujah ul Mulk, including the adventures of Futeh Khan, the vizier, is abridged from a statement of facts communicated to the author while in Khorasan.

The scientific notice contained in the twelfth chapter, is entirely furnished from observations made by him while he employed his leisure in collecting a number of specimens for the Geological Society of London. A more extended account of the geognostical relations and mineralogy of Persia is greatly to be desired. In a climate so little different from that of contiguous countries, no great novelty was to be expected in the natural productions. But a short account of the principal animals and vegetables is given, in which such as are in any respect remarkable have received particular notice.

It remains to speak of the decorations of the volume. These, with one exception,—the portrait of Abbas Mirza, which by permission was taken from the excellent picture by Sir Robert Ker Porter,—are engraved from drawings taken on the spot by the author. They were chosen from an extensive collection, more with the view of illustrating the text and conveying characteristic ideas of the country, than for producing a merely picturesque effect.

London, August, 1833.

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AN
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CHAPTER I.

General Description of Persia.

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Of all the mighty empires which have flourished in the East, that of Persia is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable and the most celebrated. Enduring through a succession of vicissitudes almost unparalleled for more than two thousand five hundred years,—by turns the prey of foreign enemies and the sport of internal revolution, yet ever subjected to despotic rule,—alternately elevated to the summit of glory and prosperity, and plunged into misery and degradation,—she has, from the earliest period of her existence, either been the throne of the lords of Western Asia, or the arena on which monarchs have disputed for the sceptre of the East. Poor and comparatively limited in extent, the more warlike of her sovereigns enriched themselves and enlarged their dominions by the most brilliant conquests; while under timid and pacific princes not only did her acquisitions crumble away, but her own provinces were frequently sub-

dued by bolder and more rapacious neighbours. Thus her boundaries were continually fluctuating with the characters of her monarchs. But it is not so much our object to write the history of the great Persian empire, as to give an outline of the annals of the country properly so called, and to place before the reader a description of its most remarkable features.

The appellation of Persia is unknown to its inhabitants, by whom that region of Asia included between the rivers Tigris and Oxus is named Iran,—a designation derived from Eerij, the youngest male child of their celebrated king Feridoon. According to tradition, that monarch, at the termination of a long and glorious reign, divided his dominions among his three sons. To Selim he gave all the possessions comprehended in modern Turkey. On Toor he bestowed the wild and extensive plains of Tartary, including all the lands beyond the Oxus, which have ever since by the Persians been denominated Tooran; while the remaining territory, bounded as we have said, fell to the share of his youngest and favourite son Eerij.

The most ancient name of the country is by some, upon Scriptural authority, held to be Elam; but that sovereignty, it is probable, embraced only a small part of Persia, having been confined to Susiana, or Kuzistan and Louristan, with a portion of the contiguous districts lying upon the Tigris.* The Paras of Scripture, the Persia of the Greeks, and the Persia of modern times, are all obviously derived from Fars, a term applied to one of the southern provinces.

As its natural limits, this kingdom has on its south the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf; the river Tigris on the south-west and west; on the north the Aras, which divides it from Armenia, Georgia, and the province of Karabaug, the Caspian Sea, and an indefinite line in the desert that separates Persian Khorasan from the oases of Kharism and the territories of Bokhara and Balkh. A like uncertainty prevails on the east, where the district of Herat and the provinces of Seistan and Beloochistan blend with the mountains of Afghanistan; but, in fact, the whole of Cabul is described by some geographers as belonging to Persia, which is thereby made to advance eastward to the Attok, and become conterminous with India.

* D'Anville; Vincent's Nearchus.

This extensive region, which occupies a space of more than twenty-five degrees of longitude by fifteen of latitude, exhibits, as may be imagined, great diversity of surface, climate, and productions. "My father's kingdom," says the younger Cyrus to Xenophon, "is so large that people perish with cold at one extremity, while they are suffocated with heat at the other,"—a description, the truth of which can be well appreciated by those who, having gasped for a season on the burning sands of the Dushtistan, have in one short month been pinched by the numbing cold of the northern provinces. This vast expanse, forming an elevated table-land, rises from a lower plane, and is interspersed with numerous clusters of hills, chains of rocky mountains, and barren deserts.

The lower ground, under the name of the Dushtistan, or level country, stretches along the foot of the hills on the coast of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, exhibiting a succession of narrow sandy wastes, where the eye is occasionally relieved by a dark plantation of date-trees and a few patches of corn, in such places as are blessed with a fresh-water rivulet or a copious well. On the banks of the Tigris this tract becomes more fertile, and Kuzistan was once celebrated for its rich productions. Between the Elburz Mountains and the Caspian Sea we again find a flat country; but there it wears an aspect of the greatest luxuriance and beauty, until it is lost in the desert which stretches away to the plains of Tartary.

The space between these low districts comprehends the more elevated plateau, which reaches a height varying from 2500 to 3500 feet above the sea. From this the mountains rise to different altitudes, seldom, however, exceeding 7000 or 8000 feet, and sometimes including between their ranges valleys of corresponding dimensions, though in other cases they seem rather like islands in the immense plain.

The most remarkable features of Persia are its chains of rocky mountains, its long, arid, riverless valleys, and the still more extensive salt or sandy deserts. There is a very magnificent range which, striking off from the Caucasus, accompanies the course of the Georgian river Kour; crosses it to the west of the plains of Mogan; covers Karabaug and Karadaug with a gloomy assemblage of black peaks; and from Ardebil runs parallel with the southern shore of the Caspian Sea to Astrabad. From thence, in an easterly direction, it passes to the north of Mushed, throwing numerous

spurs to the southward ; and, branching into the highlands of the Hazaras and Balai Mourghab, stretches by the south of Balkh into the remote province of Badakshan. Here it is lost in that great alpine tract north of Cabul, which is continuous with the Hindoo-Coosh and Himmaleh, and whence the largest rivers of Asia take their rise.

This immense chain, which extends unbroken for more than twenty degrees of longitude, sends forth everywhere a multitude of branches, that in some places sink into the great salt deserts and sandy plains on the east of Persia, and elsewhere connect themselves with other elevations. Of these the Sahund Mountains, striking off from the lake Urumeh, in a north-eastern direction, spread themselves in various clusters through Azerbijan. Another, running south and south-eastward from the junction of the Cauilan Koh and Kurdistan ranges, was known to the ancients under the name of Mount Zagros. It divides ancient Assyria from Media, and, splitting into a confused mass of ridges and valleys in Kurdistan, continues under the appellation of the Louristan and Buchtiaree Mountains, till, traversing Fars, it stretches along the Persian Gulf, at various distances from the sea, as far as Gombroon. There it disappears for a space ; but, rising again in the south of Kerman, it passes on towards the east, through the centre of Mekran and Beloochistan, until it finally sinks into the deserts of Sind, or is lost in the high grounds which diverge from the mountains of Afghanistan.

These are the principal stocks from whence arise the multitude of ramifications that cover the surface of Persia with a network, as it were, of rocky lines ; and among which are to be found a system of plains and valleys differing in size and productiveness according to the nature and climate of their respective districts. Wherever water abounds they are fertile ; but moisture is the boon of which nature is least liberal in Persia. "From the mouths of the Indus to those of the Karoon and Euphrates," says Sir John Malcolm, "a tract extending in length a distance of more than twenty degrees, cannot boast of one river that is navigable more than a few miles from the ocean."* Even streamlets are rare, and cultivation is consequently very limited.

* Macdonald Kinneir crossed four rivers in his route from Bushire to Endian, one of them sixty yards across, though not more than four feet deep.

As the Teer or Tigris forms one of these boundaries, it cannot, although necessarily a benefit to Persia, be properly considered as belonging to that country. But there are several fine tributaries which fall into it from the Buchtiaree Mountains, from Louristan and Kurdistan. Of these the principal are the Karoon, supposed by D'Anville to be the Choaspes or Eulaeus of Herodotus, the Ulai of Sacred Writ, which rises in the Koh e Zurd, near Ispahan; the Kerah or Karasu, which has its origin in the province of Ardelan, and by which Macdonald Kinneir thinks the Choaspes is more accurately represented; the Shat ul Hud, pronounced by the same author to be the Gyndes; the Tab, the ancient Arosis, which, springing from the mountains of Fars, flows past the ruins of Shapoer and the present town of Endian, to Bunder Deelem, near the head of the Persian Gulf; and the greater and lesser Zab, the Caprus and Zabelus of antiquity, both of which have their sources in the range of Gordoan, or Zagros. The Araa, the Araxes of classical writers, although also forming one of the boundaries we have assigned to Persia, derives a large portion of its waters from the mountains of Kurdistan; and the salt lake of Urumeah or Shahee receives from the same hills a number of streams, of which the Jugattee is perhaps the largest, being upwards of 200 paces wide, fifty-three miles above its mouth, near Maragha. The river which runs by Selmas is alone navigable, and that only for boats, and for a very short distance.

The northern provinces, bordering upon the Caspian Sea, are as remarkable for the multitude of their streams as the rest of the country is for its aridity; but they are for the most part mere torrents, sometimes scarcely trickling over a stony bed, at others foaming along, and tearing up every thing in their course. Of these, the Kizzelozzeen, the Herirood, which flows through Amol, and the Tedjen, which passes Saree, in Mazunderan, are the largest.

In the eastern provinces may be mentioned the Helmind or Heermund, the Etymander of the ancients, and the Furrahrood, both of which run into the salt lake of Zerrah, in Seistan. The first is a noble river, 400 yards broad, and deep and clear at Poolkee, where it was crossed by Captain Christie. The second, which has its rise in the hills north-east of Furrah, is much smaller. The Herirood, which flows past Herat, unites with the Tedjen, and, being joined by the Mourghab from the Balai Mourghab, waters the oasis

of Meru Shah Jehan, a little beyond which it is lost in the desert. The Attrick and Gourgan, both considerable streams, are fed from the northern face of the Elburz, eastward of Astrabad, and both fall into the Caspian Sea about forty miles north of that town. These are the principal rivers of Persia ; and when the reader reflects how small their volume is, and how large a surface they drain and water, he will admit that the imputation of excessive drought which has been brought against the country is completely established.

A remarkable characteristic in the topography of Persia is the frequent occurrence of salt lakes, which, together with the numerous streams impregnated with the same substance, evince the singular predominance of that mineral. Exclusive of the Caspian Sea, which, as its waters are brackish, and have no visible outlet, may be held as coming under this denomination, the lake of Urumeah is the most worthy of attention. According to the computation of Macdonald Kinneir, it is 300 miles in circumference, and it has several islands in its bosom ; but we shall have occasion to speak of it more particularly in treating of the province of Azerbaijan. The lake of Zerrah, in Seistan, and that of Baktegan in Fars, though smaller, are yet very considerable, and shall be noticed in their turn.

But a still more striking feature in the physical aspect of Persia, and which it shares with a large portion of Central Asia and Africa, is the great expanse of salt and sandy wastes. Commencing on the north, near the foot of the Elburz Mountains, and in some points penetrating their ranges, the Kuveer or Salt Desert stretches southward over much of Irak, skirting the districts of Teheran, Cashan, and Ispahan ; of Mourghab and Darabghird of Fars, in a very irregular and deeply-indented line ; insulating Yezd, and blending with the wilderness of Kerman ; while on the east, overrunning the greater part of Southern Khorasan, it unites with that of Seistan and Beloochistan. In fact, the spots that are habitable in these provinces, as well as in Mekran, may be considered rather as oases amid the surrounding desolation than as forming any continuous tract of improvable soil.

The nature of this desert varies in different places. In some the surface is dry, and even produces a few of those plants which love a salt soil ; in others we find a crackling

crust of earth, covered only with saline efflorescence. A considerable portion is marshy; and during winter, the melting of the snow, and the increase of the torrents, occasion an accumulation of water in the low parts. In the hot months, much of this is evaporated, and leaves behind a quantity of salt in the form of cakes upon a bed of mud. In certain spots sand predominates, either in the shape of heavy plains, or wave-like hillocks, easily drifted by the wind, and sometimes so light and impalpable as to prove extremely dangerous to travellers, who are not unfrequently buried in its heaps. The whole of the Gurmaseer,* or Dushtistan, falls under this description, and may, together with a considerable part of the Chab district, be held as belonging to the deserts of Persia.

The great plain which stretches from the northern foot of the Elburz to the east of the Caspian, and along the shores of that sea to the Oxus, presents features very similar to the southern wastes; that is to say, portions of salt soil interspersed with extensive tracts of sand and occasional ridges of bare rocks. In fact, there is little doubt that these two deserts are connected by means of the savage country which lies between Mushed and Balai Mourghab, as both there and in the mountains of Kohistan and of the Hazaras salt is abundant.

Nothing can be more dreary than these wastes. When the traveller has advanced some distance into them, the boundless expanse around blasted with utter barrenness, and hoary with bitter salt, glistening and baking in the rays of a fervid sun,—only broken here and there by a mass of dark rock, which is distorted by the powerful refraction into a thousand wild and varying forms,—impress him with a sense of desolation that cannot be described.

The visiter who enters Persia by way of the Gulf, sees the country under a very steril and discouraging point of view; for, after passing Capes Jask and Mussendom, his eye meets nothing but bare rocky islands, and gray precipitous cliffs, with a low, flat, sandy strip at their feet,—in other words, the Dushtistan of Kerman and Fars, with the mountains which separate it from the Sirhud, or the higher and colder plateau. His disappointment will not be less on landing at Bushire (or Abou She her), with its miserable mud hovels, its fantastic badgeers or ventilating towers, its

* There is also a Gurmaseer, in Seistan, on the banks of the Helmand.

wretched bazaars, and crooked narrow lanes bordered with hats made of date-tree leaves. "Dreariness, solitude, and heat," says Morier in his Second Journey, "are indeed the chief characteristics, not only of this town, but of all the shores of the Persian Gulf. Although Bushire be the principal seaport, there is none of that bustle and movement which usually indicate the activity of commerce." Yet, with all this display of mingled poverty and sterility, the inhabitants are for ever singing the praises of their native land,—of the Khâk e Iroonee, the Land of Iran,—with a blind and persevering partiality, which, if less arrogant, might have some claim to indulgence, but when contrasted with the reality, excites ridicule, if not disgust.

The unfavourable impression which the traveller thus receives, particularly if he come from the rich and fertile India, is but little removed by further acquaintance. The appearance of the mountains is in general forbidding in the extreme. They present to the eye little else than masses of gray rock splintered by the weather, and often starting very abruptly from the plain. Even where the mouldering strata afford a little soil, the acclivities are for the most part unenlivened by wood or herbage, and the verdure of spring has scarcely refreshed the eye for two short months before it is scorched up, and not a tuft of its rapid but transitory growth remains. Nor do the plains present a much more cheering prospect. They consist principally of gravel washed down from the eminences and lying in deep alluvial beds, or of clay, which, when devoid of moisture, is as barren as the rock itself. No trees gladden the landscape except the tall poplar, or the stately chinâr (*Platanus Orientalis*), which rise above the hovels of the peasants; or the fruit-trees of their orchards; or perhaps a few of other sorts which may have been planted on the margin of a watercourse to supply the little timber required: and these, dotting the wide plain with their dark foliage, convey to the mind a melancholy rather than a cheering impression.

Such is the general character of Persian scenery throughout the habitable parts of its southern, eastern, and central provinces; and a reference to the pages of Sir John Chardin, one of the most accurate and intelligent of travellers, will satisfy the reader as to its correctness.

In the provinces which lie to the north and west, on the banks of the Caspian Sea, in Kurdistan, Louristan, and parts of Kuzistan, wood and verdure are more abundant. Even

certain districts of Fars exhibit valleys somewhat less naked, but these constitute only a small proportion of the countries which fall under our consideration. In picturing the aspect of a Persian landscape, therefore, the reader must divest himself of every image which gives interest and beauty to a European scene. No green plains nor grassy slopes there greet the eye,—no winding rivers nor babbling streams,—no majestic woods,—no parks nor enclosures,—no castles nor seats embosomed in venerable trees, no sweet retired cottages peeping through foliage,—nothing, in short, calculated to suggest ideas of peace, comfort, or security. When the traveller looks down from the pass which he has laboriously climbed, his wearied eye wanders over a uniform brown expanse, losing itself in distance, or bounded by blue mountains, arid and rocky as those on which he stands. Should cultivation exist within the range of his vision, he could scarcely distinguish it, except in the spring, from the other parts of the plain, which it can hardly be said to diversify. Is there a village or a town in view, all he can make out is a line or a spot, chiefly remarkable for the gardens which usually surround such abodes, and not otherwise to be known from the far more abundant ruins that are everywhere scattered over the country. The broken caravansary, with its black arches,—the square mud-walled fortalice, with its crenated towers,—or the decayed castle of some bandit chief, are objects more in unison with the scene, and which give birth to painful but not ill-grounded suspicions of the melancholy condition of the inhabitants. Such is the scenery which, during many successive days, presents itself to the traveller throughout the greater part of Persia. Its extensive deserts are unquestionably impressive objects; yet so dreary is the country in general, that the difference between them and the rest of the soil is by no means very discernible.

Disappointed with the face of nature, the stranger seeks in vain for comfort in the appearance of the towns. Forming, it is probable, his ideas of such celebrated places as Ispahan, Bagdad, Shiraz, Bussora, or Tabriz, upon a fanciful model, embellished with oriental domes, minarets, and columns, he can scarcely be prepared to witness the shapeless mass of ruins and filth which even the best of these cities will present to his view; while all that they really contain of wealth, cleanliness, or convenience, is carefully concealed from the eye.

Surveyed from a commanding situation, a Persian town appears particularly monotonous and uninteresting. The houses, built of mud, do not differ in colour from the earth on which they stand, and from their lowness and irregular construction resemble casual inequalities on its surface rather than human dwellings. Even those of the great seldom exceed one story, and the lofty walls which shroud them from sight produce a blank and cheerless effect. There are no public buildings except the mosques, medresses or colleges, and caravansaries ; and these, usually mean like the rest, lie hid in the midst of the mouldering relics of former edifices. The general *coup d'œil* embraces an assemblage of flat roofs, little rounded cupolas, and long walls of mud, thickly interspersed with ruins. Minarets and domes of any magnitude are rare, and few possess claims to elegance or grandeur. Even the smoke, which, towering from the chimneys and hovering over the roofs of an English city, suggests the existence of life and comfort, does not here enliven the dreary scene ; and the only relief to its monotony is to be sought in the gardens, adorned with chinar, cypress, and fruit-trees, which, to a greater or less extent, are seen near all the towns and villages of Persia.

On approaching these places, even such of them as have been capitals of the empire, the traveller casts his eyes around for those marks of human intercourse, and listens for that hum of men, which never fail to cheer the heart and raise the spirits of the wayfarer ; but he looks and listens in vain. Instead of the well-ordered road, bordered with hedge-rows, enclosures, and gay habitations, and leading in due course to the imposing street of lofty and substantial edifices, he who approaches an Eastern town must thread the narrow and dirty lane, rugged as the torrent's bed, confined by decayed mud walls, or high enclosures of sun-dried bricks, which shut up whatever of verdure the place can boast ; he must pick his uncertain way among heights and hollows,—the fragments of old buildings, and the pits which have supplied the materials for new ones. At length reaching the wall, generally in a state of dilapidation, which girds the city, and entering the gateway, where lounge a few squalid guards, he finds himself in a sorry bazaar, or perhaps in a confusion of rubbish, as shapeless and disorderly as that without, from which he has escaped. In vain he looks for streets,—even houses are scarcely to be discerned amid the

heaps of mud and ruins, which are burrowed into holes, and resemble the perforation of a gigantic ant's-nest rather than human abodes. The residences of the rich and great, whatever be their internal comfort or luxury, are carefully secluded by high mud walls, and around them, even to the very entrances, are clustered the hovels of the poor.

Among these, then, the stranger makes his way, generally through passages and alleys so narrow and full of impediments, that a loaded ass gets along with difficulty. In such circumstances he is forced to dive into hollows, to scramble through the most offensive ruins, to stumble over grave-stones, and even to risk his neck by falling into holes, particularly when in the dark ; for there is no arrangement whatever for lighting artificially these intricate lanes. The bazaars are the only thoroughfares that deserve the appellation of streets ; and some of these, as the long continuous ones at Ispahan, the Bazaar el Wukeel at Shiraz, and some of those at Teheran, Tabriz, and other chief towns, are spacious, lofty, solidly-built, and, comparatively speaking, magnificent.*

The construction of these bazaars may be shortly described as follows :—A paved pathway, varying from eight to sixteen feet in width, separates two rows of cells, before which runs a raised platform or continuous booth. Squatted upon these sit the venders of commodities, having their goods displayed beside them : the vaults contain the rest of their stock ; and in some cases there is another apartment in the

* This description strips an oriental city so much of its fancied charms, and in some respects differs so far from that which has been given by some travellers, that although we can personally vouch for its truth, we must beg to refer our readers to the writings of authors who treat the Persian towns with more respect, but whose expressions, when fairly examined, bear out all that is stated in the text. Sir John Malcolm, vol. ii. p. 521, speaks of the "magnificence and splendour" of the Persian cities ; but two pages on he confesses that "Shiraz has not many public buildings, and as there are few gardens, and no avenues within its walls, its bare mud-terraced houses, when viewed at distance, gave it more the appearance of a ruined than a flourishing city." "Every thing within the town," says Sir R. K. Porter in 1818, vol. i. p. 693, "seems neglected ; the bazaars and maidans falling into ruins, the streets choked with dirt and mouldering heaps of unrepaired houses, and the lower orders who inhabit them squalid and insolent.... The water is so foul as to injure the health." Scott Waring says, "I am apt to believe Shiraz will disappoint those who have imagined it a populous and noble city.... Many of the streets are so narrow, that an ass loaded with wood stops the way if you are on horseback." The endless ruins of Ispahan are dwelt upon by all modern travellers, and hundreds of similar examples might be referred to.

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rear, which serves as a magazine for the more opulent shopkeepers. The whole is arched over either with well-constructed brickwork or clay ; or, in very inferior establishments, with branches of trees and thatch, which intercept the sun's rays.* Here sit the merchants and various tradesmen, each class for the most part keeping to their respective quarters ; so that smiths, braziers, shoemakers, saddlers, potters, cloth and chintz sellers, tailors, and other handcraftsmen, may generally be found together ; but confectioners, cooks, apothecaries, bakers, fruiterers, and green sellers are dispersed in various places ; sometimes setting out their wares in a manner sufficiently pleasing, although quite unlike that in which shops are arranged in Europe.

Attached to the bazaars in the larger towns there are usually several caravansaries for the accommodation of travelling merchants. The chambers of these are occupied both as offices for transacting business, and also for shops ; and the gay appearance which they present, the bustle that prevails in the space before them, and the variety of costume, manners, and language, present a spectacle highly amusing, as well as interesting.

* In the Dushtistan, date-tree branches are used for this purpose ; in Masunderan and Ghilan the tops both of the houses and bazaars are made of wood, thatched or tiled.

CHAPTER II.

Account of the Provinces of Persia.

Provinces—Fars—Its Nature—Shiraz—Province of Laristan—Of Kuzistan—Dorak—Struter—Shus, the ancient Susa or Shushan—Province of Irak—Its Aspect and Condition—Ispahan—Casan—Koom—Teheran—Casbin—Sultanieh—Hamadan—Kermanshah—Yezd—Kurdistan—Province of Ardelan—Province of Azerbaijan—Lake Shabee—Margaha—Ardebil—Tabriz—Shores of the Caspian Sea—Province of Ghilan—Of Mazunderan—Saree and Furrabbad—Fisheries on the Caspian—Province of Astrabad—Palace of Ashruff—Province of Khorasan—Muashed and its Shrine—Meru—Districts to the South—Herat—Province of Kerman—City—Gombroon—Province of Seistan—Of Mekran—Divisions—Beloochistan—Character of its Population—Travels of Christie and Pottinger—Mekran Proper—Its Inhabitants—Climate.

HAVING given in the preceding chapter a general sketch of the most prominent features of Persia, we shall next endeavour to make the reader acquainted with the nature and extent of its several provinces. These are,—

Fars,	Ardelan,	Mazunderan,	Seistan,
Laristan,	Azerbaijan,	Astrabad,	Kerman,
Kuzistan,	Ghilan,	Khorasan,	Mekran.
Irak,			

The province of FARS, the ancient Persis, which we shall suppose the traveller to enter at Bushire, is with some variation, perfectly characterized by the foregoing description. It is bounded by the Persian Gulf on the south; on the east by Kerman and Laristan; on the west it has Kuzistan; and on the north Irak. The eastern parts are more sandy and arid than those to the north and north-west; but, singular as it may appear, the latter support a population comparatively smaller than the former, and Colonel M'Donald Kinneir, in 1809, travelled sixty miles between Bebhan and Shiraz, through the most delightful vales covered with wood and verdure, without seeing a human being. The northern section bordering upon Irak is principally occupied by wandering tribes, and consists chiefly of rocky mountains enclosing long

narrow glens, many of which afford excellent grazing. That of Khoosk e Zurd (so named from the Yellow Palace, one of the hunting-seats of Baharam Gour) is about 150 miles long by fifteen in breadth, the gravelly skirts of the hill slope in long inclined sweeps to the centre of the valley, which is of rich black loam, and fertilized by several streams; but "the ruins of towns, villages, and palaces," says the colonel, "prove that the Eliauts were not always permitted to monopolise what might in truth be denominated the garden of Persia."

The capital of Fars is the famous Shiraz,—a city which had assuredly no pretensions to importance before the Mohammedan conquest. Ebn Haukul ascribes its foundation to a brother of Hujaje ibn Yussuff, a tyrannical Arabian governor, in the year of the Hejira 74; while a tradition less worthy of credit refers its origin to Tahmuras Devebund, or to a king named Fars, grandson of Noah. Shiraz has at no time been remarkable for its splendour; for the oldest travellers allude not to any monuments nor magnificent buildings. Mandelsdo declares that, in 1515, it did not contain 10,000 houses, although its ruins extended two miles. Sir Thomas Herbert, who is usually accurate, speaks indeed of certain minarets as high as St. Pauls; and though he means the old church of that name, it is difficult to account for the assertion, as no other writer mentions them. Nor are there any remains to indicate where they stood, unless they were those to which Le Bruyn adverts cursorily in 1705, in describing a mosque "with porticoes and two handsome towers, of which the tops have been damaged." Tavernier pays no high compliment except to its wines and fruits, which are still celebrated; and he states, that its mud walls had fallen down. Le Bruyn, after an imposing enumeration of 38 muhulehs or wards, 300 mosques, 200 baths, and so on, concludes by saying that the "greater number of the buildings in this city, which has a circuit of two leagues, are in a decayed state, and the streets so narrow and dirty as to be scarcely passable in rainy weather." Even in the time of Chardin the place was full of ruins, and he could launch into no great praises of its beauty, or its public edifices. The Jumah Musjed, or that generally called the Musjed e Now or New Mosque, founded above 600 years ago by Attabeg Shah, is the only structure which he calls magnificent; but he adds, it is superior to any in Ispahan. Scott



Shiraz, from the Pass of Tungeh Ali Akbar.



Waring doubts if Shiraz ever merited the encomiums lavished upon it : he states the circumference to be about five miles, and that at least one-fourth of its houses are in ruins. We should suppose that this proportion is much greater ; and the melancholy effects of a late earthquake have still farther reduced the number of habitable mansions. Before that catastrophe, the population might amount to 30,000, though Sir W. Ouseley estimated them at not more than 20,000.

The principal object of curiosity within the walls is the Bazaar e Wukeel, erected by Kureem Khan Zund, a magnificent arcade half a mile long, and perhaps forty feet wide, constructed of excellent brick-work, and affording accommodation to several hundred shopkeepers. The mollahs withhold from Christians admittance into the great mosque mentioned above, the front of which is said to be 150 yards. Sixty other places of worship, though generally mean, with an equal number of Imamzadehs or tombs of saints, attest the justice of this city's claims to sanctity.* All indeed that now remains entire of Shiraz is the work of Kureem Khan, who raised up its mutilated fences, built a citadel, with many mosques and colleges, as well as its celebrated bazaar. It, however, owes its principal interest to certain objects in its vicinity ; for the tombs of Sadi and Hafiz are still to be seen close to the spot which gave them birth. But the rose-gardens have faded since the days of the poet ; its environs are covered with ruins and wretchedness ;† a broken monument marks the site of the "sweet bowers of Mosselah," and the celebrated stream of Roknabad is now only a rill, drawing its silver thread through a scarcely perceptible strip of verdure.

Besides Shiraz, Fars could once boast of several great cities, which in their turn became capitals of the empire.

Of Ishtakhar mention will be made hereafter, when describing the ruins of Persepolis. The antiquities of Darabgerd, Firozeabad, and Fesa, will also be adverted to. These disappointed the expectation of Sir W. Ouseley, and the towns themselves now are far from being of any importance.

* Shiraz also pretends to superior learning, and was of old called the Daur al Ilim, or the Gate or Abiding-place of Science ; but the character of its inhabitants for bravery is better established.

† There are several royal gardens, with their corresponding palaces and pleasure-houses in the vicinity of the city ; and at a further distance to the east there are a number of gardens belonging to individuals.

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The first may contain 15,000 inhabitants,—the second not above one-fifth that number; but Firozeabad is distinguished as having been built by Ardeshir Babegan, the first of the Sassanian monarchs, and for still having in its vicinity some traces of his dynasty. Kauzeroun probably grew out of the ruins of Shapoor, although, like every city of Persia, it lays claim to a remote antiquity. It is still a place of some importance, being situated in a fine and well-watered valley; but civil wars and rapacity have so much impoverished it, that, with all its advantages, it cannot boast of more than 3000 or 4000 inhabitants; and its walls enclose more ruins than houses.

LARISTAN, once an independent kingdom, now a parched desert, needs little description. Rocky mountains, and valleys of sand and salt, alone diversify its surface. Yet Chardin says he found in several places the orange, the pomegranate, and the date-tree, growing luxuriantly. The city contained about 200 houses, composed chiefly of the date-tree; nor does he speak of the ancient magnificence and extensive ruins alluded to by other authors. The noble bazaar constructed by order of Shah Abbas is the sole object worthy of attention in the place, if we except the castle, which stands upon a hill behind the town, and is reputed to have been impregnable. But its chief defence appears to have arisen from the impossibility of approaching it. The seaport of Congoon is said to accommodate 6000 inhabitants, and to afford an excellent roadstead, where a frigate might lie safely at anchor. But the whole of the coast is in possession of piratical Arabs, and many of their most favourite places of resort are to be found in its bays and creeks.

KUZISTAN, the ancient Susiana, which lies to the northwest of Fars, upon the northern bank of the Tigris, may be divided into two districts essentially different from each other in their character and climate. The first, extending from the shores of the Gulf to the hills bordering upon the fine valley of Ram Hormuz, and from the banks of the Tab to the confluence of the Karoon and Abzal, is called the Chab country. It is subject to an Arab sheik, who maintains a dubious independence in this miserable territory, by far the greater part of which is entirely desert, and during the heats of summer very dangerous, from a scorching wind that, like the simoom, destroys both travellers and cattle. Only in the environs of Dorak, on the banks of the Hafer (a branch of the Karoon),

and on those of the Shut el Arab, is there found any fertility; and there dates and rice are produced. Dorak, or rather Felahi, built upon the site of the ancient Dorak by Sheik Solyman, and the principal town of the Chab province, is a wretched place. It stands on the banks of the Jerahi, is about two miles in circumference, consists chiefly of date-tree huts, is surrounded by a mud wall, and contains 7000 or 8000 inhabitants. Here resides the sheik in patriarchal style, occupying with his brothers and family a large but indifferent palace. His revenues amount to about 50,000L a-year; and, in 1809, he could bring 25,000 horsemen and 20,000 foot into the field. But these troops were totally undisciplined, and unfit to contend with any regular force. Several powerful tribes having rebelled, a battle, in which 10,000 on each side were engaged four days, was fought while Colonel M'Donald Kinneir was in the country, and there were in all but five men killed and wounded. This fact may serve to illustrate the spirit of the combatants, and the general character of their wars.

The government of Shuster, which is under charge of a beglerbeg, forms the second division, and comprises not only the fairest part of Kuzistan, but that which might be rendered the most productive province of Persia. Watered by four large rivers, the Karoon, the Abzal, the Kerah or Karasu, and the Shut el Hud, besides many lesser streams, and blessed with a rich soil, it might be made the granary of the empire; but ignorance and oppression have reduced a country, which once yielded the best crops of cotton and sugar, rice and grain, to a condition little better than that of a forsaken waste. "The exorbitant contributions levied by the beglerbeg from the cultivators of the soil had been exacted with so much severity," says Colonel Macdonald Kinneir, "as to drive these unfortunate people from their habitations; and the eye became fatigued with the continued chain of deserted villages." To this may be added the depredations of the wandering tribes, both Persian and Arabian, who feed their flocks on the banks of the several rivers. Five chiefs, four of whom were brothers, having seized upon the beautiful valley of Ram Hormuz,* indulged their marauding disposi-

* It is sixty miles long by six to eight in breadth, and is watered by the Jerahi. The ruins of an ancient city of the same name are to be seen in the valley, which was also the scene of that decisive battle between Ardeshir Babegan and Artabanes (the last of the Arsacidae), in

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tion so far as to carry off each other's cattle and corn. When Colonel Macdonald and Major Monteith were travelling through this district in 1810, they became alternately the guests of two of these relations, who each heartily abused the other. At the house of the youngest, just as they had finished breakfast, the host entered armed and equipped for an expedition. He said he was sure that shabby fellow his brother, whom they had seen the previous day, must have treated them scurvily, as he knew nothing of true hospitality, —but if they would accompany him, they should have their revenge, and as much plunder as their horses could carry off. This proposal was of course declined, and the chief proceeded upon his enterprise, from which, towards evening, he returned loaded with booty. When on such occasions blood is shed, and complaints are made, these turbulent chiefs are summoned to the tribunal of the Beglerbeg of Beahan; but the party who deposes with the judge the largest sum of money is always sure to gain the cause.

The same gentlemen being attacked in the desert, between Shuster and Ram Hormuz, by a Persian tribe, not only beat them off, but took one of their leaders. Returning to the city, they demanded in the name of the British ambassador that he should be publicly chastised. But the governor, who was their personal friend, confessed his inability to punish the offender, and advised them rather to close with an offer which he made, to conduct them through the desert on condition of receiving pardon. This alternative was accepted. Next morning accordingly the travellers set out, escorted by sixty of the same banditti who on the preceding day had attempted to murder them; and who now, after accompanying them to the borders of their country, a distance of seventy miles, retired contented with a trifling present.

Shuster, the capital of the district, and residence of the beglerbeg, stands at the foot of the Buchtiaree Mountains, on an eminence above the river Karoon, over which there is a bridge of one arch eighty feet high. It boasts of many magnificent remains. The castle, said to have been the abode of the Emperor Valerian when taken prisoner by Shapoor, the second of the Sassanides, is still partly standing, and a single gate in the Roman fashion, which was furnished

which the former was victorious, and was hailed on the field as Shah in Shah.

with a drawbridge, is yet entire. Near it is a noble dyke or bund, built across the Karoon by Shapoor, to raise the water for purposes of irrigation. It is composed of cut stone, bound together with iron clamps, and is 400 yards in length. The damage it had sustained, from accident or neglect was repaired by the late Mohammed Ali Meeza, governor of Kermanshah,—a rare instance of patriotic munificence in the ruling family of Persia. The artificial canal formed by this dyke crosses the country in a winding direction to Dezphool; it is spanned by a bridge of hewn stone consisting of thirty-two arches, of which twenty-eight are standing, and is the work of the same magnificent monarch.

The city of Shuster contains, according to Colonel Macdonald, about 15,000 souls, the houses being well built of stone, although the streets are narrow and dirty. It is said to have been erected by Shapoor, under the direction of his prisoner Valerian; and to this opinion the traveller so often quoted inclines, rather than to that which would identify it with the ancient Susa, or Shushan of Scripture. He conceives that this appellation may be more correctly assigned to Shus, a mass of ruins situated upon the banks of the Kerah or Karasu. The remains, which occupy an immense space between that river and the Abzal, consist of heaps of rubbish, somewhat resembling those of Babylon; the whole being now a howling wilderness, the haunt of lions, hyenas, and other beasts of prey. In the midst of this desolation, at the foot of one of the largest piles, stands a small and comparatively modern building, erected, it is said, on the spot where rest the bones of the prophet Daniel; and this tomb served to protect during a whole night the two travellers whom we have named from the fierce animals which infest its precincts. Such is the fallen state of the ancient Shushan! such the condition of the rich province of Elam and its stately capital! of that proud city which witnessed the magnificence of the Median and Persian kings in the height of their glory, and was the scene of the prophetic vision of Daniel,* but which, like the mortal remains of that inspired person himself, has mouldered into dust; while the rich country of which it was the ornament, with all its

* Daniel viii. 2.

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gardens, its cultivated fields and populous villages, is one vast and desolate waste.*

IRAK, which comprises the greater part of ancient Media and Parthia, is the largest and one of the most valuable provinces of Persia, and contains, besides the modern capital Ispahan, many of the finest cities in the kingdom. The appearance of it, we are told by Colonel Macdonald Kinneir, is almost everywhere the same, being entirely mountainous ; and, like the northern part of Fars, the valleys are of indefinite length, though they seldom exceed ten or fifteen miles in breadth. The hills, which are bare and devoid of timber, run almost invariably from west to east, and either gradually sink into the desert, or throw out branches into the provinces of Kerman and Khorasan. The valleys are for the most part uncultivated, except in the vicinity of the villages ; but cannot on that account (at least those to the north and west) be called sterile : on the contrary, the land is good and capable of yielding abundance of corn. "It is oppression, and a consequent deficiency of population, not the poor-ness of soil and want of water, that occasions the present desolate appearance of those plains, which the ruins of cities and of aqueducts demonstrate to have been formerly in a very different condition." Such is an accurate description of this province in general ; and though a partial improvement has occasionally resulted from a more lenient administration, as in those districts more immediately under the government of the late Sudr Ameen, still the greater part bears witness to the destructive operation of a venal tyranny.

Ispahan, although fallen from that high and palmy state which in the reign of the Sooffees rendered it one of the noblest capitals of the East, and though no longer exalted by the residence of its sovereign, still holds the first rank among Persian cities. The most minute and accurate account of it, while yet the seat of empire, is that given by Chardin, who has interwoven with his detail of palaces, caravansaries, and mosques, so great a variety of curious matter, as to give singular interest to a subject that otherwise must have been ex-

* For the arguments which are adduced to prove that the ruins of Shus are those of Shushan or Susa, we refer to Colonel Macdonald Kinneir's Memoir, p. 97, *et seq.*,—to Sir W. Ouseley's Travels, and to Bell's edition of Rollin's Ancient History, Glasgow, 1826, vol. i. p. 194 (note). Assuredly Kuzistan, with its numerous ruins, presents a richer field of research to the antiquary than any other province of Persia.

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cessively tedious. We shall, however, content ourselves with a few particulars resting upon his authority ; and then by the aid of modern travellers endeavour to convey an idea of the present state of this great metropolis.

Ispahan, by some considered as the Aspadana of Ptolemy, and certainly a very ancient city,* is built upon the Zeinderood, which, rising in the Koh e Zurd or Yellow Mountain, has been artificially increased by the addition of another river, called by Chardin the Mahmood Ker ; and although furnishing during the heats of summer but a scanty stream, in the spring months it attains to a size which equals the Seine at Paris in winter. The walls, constructed of mud, are estimated by the traveller just named at about 20,000 paces in circumference.† Even in his time they were in bad repair, and so closely surrounded by houses and gardens that they could hardly be seen ; while of 38,249 buildings which were reckoned as belonging to the city, 29,469 were within and 8780 without their circuit. Of these structures 162 were mosques, 48 medressas, 1802 caravansaries, and 273 hummaums or baths ; and the population was differently estimated at from 600,000 to 1,100,000. This would give the extraordinary average of from twenty to thirty persons for each house.‡ Chardin affirms that Ispahan was as populous as London in those days, and consequently more so than any other city of Europe. The Persians, with their usual vanity, conceived that no town in the universe could come near it in point of grandeur and size ; and the saying, “ Ispahan nēsfe -jehan ust,” (Ispahan is half the world) is still in their mouths. The country ten leagues round was richly covered with gardens, orchards, and cultivation of every kind, and 1500 well-peopled villages poured daily supplies into the capital ; for, excepting cattle, the neighbourhood furnished every necessary. So closely invested was the city with these

* Early in the third century it is mentioned as having been taken by Ardeshir Babegan.

† He also says that the city is twenty-four miles round.

‡ The credit due to these statements would greatly depend upon the definition of the term *house*. If, for instance, the dwelling of a great lord, which may contain a harem and slaves to the extent of 100 or 200 souls, be considered as only forming one house, it would bring the average more within probable bounds. It must likewise be remembered that, in estimating the population of an Eastern town, by the numbers that frequent the streets, a large allowance should be made for the women, who for the most part come little out.

orchards, and so numerous were the rows of noble chinars within the walls, that scarcely any buildings were discernible from a distance, except a few of the domes and minarets appearing above the trees. Its greatest beauty consisted in the number of magnificent palaces, gay and smiling houses, spacious caravansaries, and handsome bazaars which studded every quarter ; for the streets were as crooked, narrow, and dirty as at present, and unpaved, like those of most Persian towns.

Such was the state of Ispahan when Chardin wrote. Its palaces were then the dwelling of a powerful monarch and his family. His splendid court was crowded by wealthy nobles, who embellished the city with their habitations, and gave life and animation to the squares and public places with their glittering retinues. The bazaars were frequented by merchants who filled them with valuable commodities ; caravans arrived daily, and the streets swarmed with a dense population. The mosques were served by numerous mol-lahs and priests, while the colleges were filled with pupils and teachers. The accounts, even of those modern travellers who are most disposed to view Persia with a favourable eye make manifest how lamentably the scene is altered.

"Nothing," says the author of 'Sketches of Persia,' "can exceed the fertility and beauty of the country in the vicinity of Ispahan ; and the first view of that city is very imposing. All is noble that meets the eye,—the groves, avenues, and spreading orchards with which it abounds, concealing the ruins of this once famed capital. A nearer view, however, dispels the illusion ; but still much remains of wealth, if not of splendour."—"Among the first objects that strike our eyes," remarks Sir Robert Ker Porter (on his approach from the same direction, the south), "were the numerous and nobly-constructed bridges, each carrying its long level line of thickly-ranged arches to porch-like structures of the finest elevations ; some fallen into stately ruin, others nearly entire, but all exhibiting splendid memorials of the triumphal ages of the Sofi race . . . All spoke of the gorgeous, populous past, but all that remained in present life seemed lost in silence . . . We entered the southern gate of the town, and immediately came out into one of those umbrageous avenues of trees which render the interior of Ispahan in this quarter a very paradise. It terminated in the great bazaar of Shah Abbas, the whole of which enormous length of building is

vaulted above, to exclude heat, but admit air and light. Hundreds of shops without an inhabitant filled the sides of this epitome of a deserted mercantile world ; and having traversed their untrodden labyrinths for an extent of nearly two miles, we entered the Maidan Shah, another spacious, soundless theatre of departed grandeur. The present solitude of so magnificent a place was rendered more impressive by our horses' footsteps as we passed through its immense quadrangle to the palace that was to be our temporary abode."

The above may be contrasted with the account given by Morier of the entry of Sir Harford Jones, the British envoy, in 1809 :—"The great number of buildings which stud every part of the plain of Ispahan might lead the traveller to suppose that he was entering a district of immense population ; yet almost the whole view consists of the ruins of towns, and there are only here and there spots which are enlivened by the communities of men. But whatever may be the condition of modern Persia, its former state, if the remains scattered over the country are sufficient evidences,* must have been flourishing and highly-peopled. . . . When we came to the plain, the city of Ispahan rose upon the view, and its extent was so great east and west that my sight could not reach its bounds. The crowd was now intensely great, and at intervals quite impeded our progress We proceeded along the banks of the Zeinderood, on the opposite side of which were rows of firs and ancient pinasters. We saw three bridges of singular yet beautiful construction. That over which we crossed was composed of thirty-three lower arches, above each of which were ranged three smaller ones. There is a covered causeway for foot-passengers ; the surface of the bridge is paved, and level throughout the whole of its extent. After we had crossed it, we proceeded through a gate into the Char Baugh, which is a spacious piece of ground, having two rows of chinar-trees in the middle, and two more on each side. The garden is divided into parterres, and copiously watered by canals of water, which run from one side of it to the other, and which, at regular intervals, are collected into basins, square or octagonal. This

* That they are not entirely so might easily be proved ; as ruins in a dry climate will remain for many ages, and those belonging to very different eras may be viewed as having all existed in their entire state at one and the same time, thus attributing to one period the aggregate population of many.

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fine alley is raised at separate distances into terraces, from which the water falls in cascades. Of the chinar-trees which line the walks, most can be traced to the time of Shah Abbas; and when any have fallen, others have been immediately planted. On either side of the Char Baugh are the eight gardens which the Persians call Hesht Behesht, or Eight Paradises. They are laid out into regular walks of the chinar-tree, are richly watered, and have each a pleasure-house, of which we were conducted to occupy the best,—that, at least, which certainly was more in repair than the others. The rest are in a state of decay, and corroborate only by the remains of the beautifully-painted walls and gilded panels those lively and luxuriant descriptions of their splendour which travellers have given."

The present writer entered Isphahan by the same route; but the distressing circumstances in which he was then placed,* as well as the unfavourable season and state of the weather, clouded all the gayety and added to the melancholy tone of the scene. The yellow leaves whirling from the tall trees, as a cold and rainy blast swept through them, harmonized with the desolate expanse of ruins which stretched on every side. The eye, wandering over saddening objects, could scarcely penetrate the dull haze that was settling around; and even the numerous cavalcade which accompanied the party, wrapped in their cloaks, exhibited no brilliance nor animation, and seemed rather to hurry onward to get the business of the day over, that they might retire to their homes.

The most complete view of the city is obtained from a tower to the south, called Meel e Shatir.† A very imposing

* The author also accompanied a mission to Ispahan in 1821; but it was his painful task to perform alone the last duties to the envoy, Dr. Jukes, who died in that city of a fever, contracted doubtless by exertion in hastening to the scene of his negotiations.

† This column was probably so called because persons aspiring to be king's shatirs proved their abilities by running, between sunrise and sunset, a certain number of times to this pillar and back to the palace; but tradition assigns to the name a more romantic origin. A king of Persia promised his daughter in marriage to any one who should run before his horse all the way from Shiraz to Ispahan. One of his shatirs had so nearly accomplished the task as to gain this height, when the monarch, alarmed lest he should be forced to fulfil the agreement, dropped his whip. The shatir, aware that, owing to the ligatures these people tied around their bodies to enable them to perform such feats, it would be death to stoop, contrived to pick it up with his foot. The trick thus having failed, the royal rider dropped his ring: the shatir then saw that

though melancholy prospect likewise presents itself on ascending to the top of the principal gate of the palace, termed Ali Capi or Exalted, which overlooks the Maidan Shah,—an almost interminable variety of houses, walls, mosques, shops, bazaars, and shapeless structures, stretching over the plain on all sides to the distant mountains. But unvaried as are the visible objects, it is not until the want of noise, or smoke, or dust, or movement forces itself upon the observation, that the spectator knows he is looking on a vast desert of ruins. When the author of these pages saw this remarkable scene, perhaps the desolate effect was heightened by the season of the year. Only on the side of the palace was the eye relieved by the sumptuous edifices and gardens enclosed within the walls, and by the dome of a mosque or a medressa, whose lacquered tiles glittered in the sun. Even in these gardens, and in the noble avenues of Shah Abbas, the forms of the trees have been spoilt by trimming them into tall rods with bushes at their tops, not unlike those in the vicinity of London, so that they neither make a show nor afford much shade.

Of the palaces, the Chehel Sittoon is the most sumptuous. Its Hall of Columns, from which the name is derived, inlaid with mirrors so as to resemble pillars of glass, is reflected from a basin of clear water which stretches in front. The walls and roof are decorated with the same fragile material, but with much taste, and interspersed with flowers of gold, so as to convey an impression of great magnificence. Within is a saloon seventy-five feet long by thirty-six wide, forming a noble gallery; on the walls of which are six large and many smaller pictures, representing the achievements of Shah Ismael, Nadir Shah, and other Persian conquerors, with some banquet-scenes, which furnish curious memorials of the manners and customs of past ages. In this splendid hall are rolled up and carefully preserved by each successive sovereign the superb carpets that were trodden by the Great Abbas, more than two hundred years ago, which far surpass in beauty and texture the flimsy fabrics of modern manufacture. This palace is situated in the centre of a garden, divided, according to the national custom, into compartments by walks and canals bordered with poplars and stately chi-

his fate was decided, and exclaiming, "O king, you have broken your word, but I am true to the last!" he stooped, picked up the ring, and exposed:

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nars. There are, besides, a number of other palaces, each in its own garden : as the Narangistan, or Orangery ; the Ungooristan, or Grapery ; the Eynah Khaneh, or Hall of Mirrors ; the Ashruff Khaneh ; the Tâlár Tabeealah ; the Hesht Behesht ; the Gooldushteh ; all possessing their separate beauties, but which admit not of suitable description.

Of the mosques and colleges celebrated by Chardin, many have fallen into decay : but the Musjed Shah, and that of Lootf Oollah in the Maidan Shah, are in perfect preservation and richly adorned. The medressa built by the mother of Shah Abbas is by far the most elegant, and in the best repair. Its gates are covered with wrought silver ; and in the garden are some fine old pinasters and chinars, which have never been profaned by axe or knife.

But in the days of its splendour, perhaps the greatest ornament of Ispahan was the Maidan Shah or Great Square, to which may be assigned a length of 700 yards and a breadth of 200. Each side presents a double range of arched recesses, the longest containing eighty-six, the shortest thirty. In the centre of the south-western face rises the Ali Capi gate ; opposite to which, in the north-eastern side, stands the mosque of Lootf Oollah. The superb entrance of the Musjed Shah occupies the centre of the south-eastern end, and in the middle of the north-western is the great gate leading to the principal bazaar and the town. Above this gate in old times stood the clock mentioned by Chardin, which used to amuse the people with its puppets, but this is no longer in existence ; nor do the cannon, which were placed within a balustrade before the gate of the palace, retain their position. The balustrade itself is gone ; and the Maidan has ceased to present the busy scene it was wont to display in more prosperous days. Of the trees that surrounded it not one is left ; the canals which supplied it with water are dry.* The houses in its vicinity are no longer inhabited,—the very doors are built up ; a blank row of archways occupies the place where the most brilliant shops arranged their wares. That great area, where the nobles of Persia mustered their glittering trains and the chivalry of the kingdom exhibited their prowess before their gallant monarch, or which echoed with the shouts and sparkled with the pomp of the dazzling No Roz, is now a cheerless and deserted void. Little is heard

* Sir R. K. Porter says there was water in them.

save the occasional tramp of a mule ; its loneliness is rarely interrupted unless by the gowned form of a mollah as he creeps towards the mosque, or by the worshippers who resort thither at the hour of prayer. The bazaars are still partially crowded, and nothing shows the former wealth and greatness of this capital more than the immense accommodation prepared for trade. For miles together the stranger finds himself led along these vaulted receptacles, on each side of which are openings leading to caravansaries. But many of these are falling to decay ; and even the bazaar of Shah Abbas is partially unoccupied, while some of its caravansaries have been converted into stables for the cattle, mules, and asses of the townspeople.

From all that has been said of this celebrated capital, it will be inferred that its present population is comparatively small. The miseries it suffered during the Afghan usurpation were succeeded by the loss of that which alone could have repaired the evil,—the presence of the sovereign. Years of anarchy increased the desolation, and tyranny completed it. In 1800, the inhabitants were calculated by Malcolm to amount to 100,000 ; in 1810, they were said to be double that number ; but, if any reliance can be placed upon information obtained on the spot in 1821, it did not at that period contain nearly so many. In fact, it is not easy on this subject to approach the truth.

The suburb of Julfah, so celebrated as a colony of Armenians transported from the city of that name on the Araxes, suffered no less in this ruthless invasion ; but it began to decline from the time it lost its founder. In the days of Shah Abbas it contained 30,000 inhabitants or 3400 families, with twenty-four churches and a large ecclesiastical establishment.* Sir W. Ouseley estimated them at from 300 to 400 households ; but the Rev. Henry Martyn states, that in 1813 there were 500 families,† who attended twelve parish churches, served by about twenty priests. They are a poor oppressed race, and consequently unprincipled, deceitful, and mean.

The causes which reduced the city of Ispahan to its present condition have extended to the whole district. All the way indeed to the frontiers of Fars the eye is caught by the

* Twenty bishops and 100 other clergy. Rev. Henry Martyn's Journal in 1811.

† A census stated to have been taken of the inhabitants of Julfah by order of their bishop, which made them 15,500.

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appearance of villages and towns, which a nearer approach discovers to be almost tenantless.

From Ispahan to Teheran the road passes through a country which, generally speaking, presents few signs of fertility or populousness. During the first thirty miles, the vestiges of former prosperity decrease, although at the village of Moor-chacoor there is a considerable tract of improved land. Travellers find accommodation in an excellent caravansary built by the mother of Shah Abbas, with good stables, baths, and a reservoir of water. It is celebrated as the scene of the action between Nadir Shah and the Afghan Ashruff, in which the power of the latter was finally broken.

The next twenty miles lead over a dreary plain without verdure or cultivation. So great is the deception created by its uniform surface, that an object fully twelve miles distant did not seem more than three from the eye ; and in clear weather it was difficult to imagine that a point which was supposed to be almost within hail should have proved the next halting-place at least a score of miles in advance. From thence the road winds among hills to Kohrood, a beautiful village in a valley abounding with orchards and fruit-trees, and which in spring and summer is a truly delightful place. From the top of the pass above Kohrood a noble prospect is obtained of all the country to the foot of the Elburz Mountains, with their fine outline extending from west to east as far as the eye can reach ; and the lofty conical peak of Demawund clad in snow is seen soaring far above the rest into the clouds that usually rest upon its shoulders. In this range are seen the lovely valleys of Khonsar, Natunz, and others, —the first remarkable for its rich gardens and the romantic character of its rocks,—the second famous for its pears, peaches, and pretty girls. All this district produces abundance of excellent silk.

An agreeable ride down the glen brings the traveller to the town of Cashan, which is situated in a plain some distance from the mountain-foot, and visible long ere he approaches it. The country around is well cultivated, and yields fruits of all sorts, especially pears, melons, figs, and grapes. The pomegranates of a certain garden at Cashan are particularly exquisite and famous. The town itself is fully as large as Shiraz, while it is less ruinous and better peopled. It is said to have been founded by Zobeide, the wife of Haroun al Raschid ; but Sir William Ouseley contends that she could

only have enlarged or rebuilt it, as it is mentioned in history as having, in conjunction with Koom, furnished its contingent of troops at the fatal battle of Kudseah (A. D. 636). It is now famous for the manufacture of silk and cotton stuffs, brocades, carpets, and particularly for its copper ware.

From Cashan to Koom the road is fifty-seven miles, and leads chiefly through a country depopulated by the inroads of the Turkomans, skirting the Kuveer or great salt desert of Khorasan, and at the foot of a range of singularly barren hills, composed of rocks of a primitive character.

No two cities can form a stronger contrast to each other than Koom and Cashan,—the latter neat, populous, and industrious,—the former idle and fanatical, the abode of ignorance and bigotry. On entering the gateway ruins and dirt meet the eye ; and if a human figure appear, ten to one it is that of a mollah. The place is rich only in shrines and priests, the domes and minarets of the imamzadehs and mosques being more numerous than the inhabited houses ; yet many even of these were falling into decay, and the storks' nests on their tops gave them a still greater air of desolation. As a place of Sheah pilgrimage it ranks next to Kerbelah and Mushed, and many rich gifts are offered by the more distinguished visitors. The king frequently repairs thither, and keeps up a show of pious humility by walking on foot and bestowing presents, which, however, are sometimes more showy than valuable. The most celebrated shrine at Koom is the mausoleum of Fatima al Masoomah,—Fatima the Immaculate,—a sister of Ali Reza, the eighth imam. The remains of this lady repose in a tomb, the top of which is enclosed by a frame of sandal-wood, under a green silk canopy, and surrounded by a grate with cross bars of massy silver. This occupies the centre of a lofty mosque, adorned with mosaic-work in coloured tiles, and fitted up with rich carpets. The sepulchre is coeval with the period of Fatima's death ; but the mosque was erected by the present monarch upon the ruins of a smaller building endowed by Shah Abbas ; and his mother covered the dome with gilt tiles, which make a resplendent show even at a great distance. All the Suffaveen kings have added to its ornaments or its wealth. The sword of the great Abbas hangs within the railing ; and Shah Sefi I. and Abbas II. lie interred in the edifice.

The city, which, from the sanctity of its priests and saints, has obtained the name of Daur al Moursheedeen, the Abode

of the Pious, claims a high antiquity ; and D'Anville supposes it to be the Choana of Ptolemy. But its sacred character has not saved it from the fanaticism or barbarity of other sectarians ; for it was destroyed by Timur, and by the Afghans in 1722, from which last misfortune it has never recovered.

From Koom to Teheran is eighty miles, the greater part of which lies across a desert, including an arm of a salt marsh called the Deria Kuveer. After leaving this barren track, the traveller enters a pass among low mountains, distinguished by the ominous name of Dereh Malek al Mout,—the Valley of the Angel of Death ; and dreary and dangerous enough it is, especially in bad weather. It fell to the lot of the author of these pages to ride, without stopping, except to feed the horses, from Koom to Teheran, and to pass the Deria Kuveer in a bitter evening, and this formidable valley in the dark snowy night that followed. The party lost their way, which was only found with difficulty after meeting a small caravan of mules ; and one of the servants was nearly frozen to death as they entered the caravansary of Kinaraghird. The sight of the plain of Teheran at daybreak, with that of the city at the foot of the Elburz, was most gratifying, although the walls were still many miles distant and the adjoining mountains covered with snow.

The plain which the present capital of Persia stands has no beauty to recommend it ; being bare, very partially cultivated, totally deficient in trees, and producing no verdure, unless during spring. The city itself merits little attention, except in as far as it is the residence of the sovereign. It is about four miles in circumference, girt with a high mud wall, flanked with numerous towers and a dry ditch. The ark or palace is the only building of consequence. The bazaars are well filled ; the mosques, colleges, and caravansaries in good repair ; and the private houses are plain, but comfortable. It might appear strange that the monarch should have chosen for the seat of his court a place originally so mean ; but this preference is explained by its vicinity to Mazunderan and Astrabad, the native possessions of his family. The population varies with his periodical motions. While he continues there it amounts to at least 100,000 souls : when he removes it decreases about two-thirds. There are several gardens and country-houses to which his majesty occasionally repairs, as the Tucht e Kujeriah and

the Nigahristan ; but before the heats of summer commence, he always assembles his army, and encamps on the plains of Sultanieh.

The most interesting object near Teheran are the ruins of Rhé, the Rhages of Scripture and of Arian, contemporary with Nineveh and Ecbatana, and celebrated as the scene of many important events. Here Alexander halted for five days in his pursuit of Darius. It was the capital of the Parthian kings, and, above all, the birthplace and a favourite resort of Haroun al Raschid. It has been repeatedly ruined by wars and by earthquakes. In the tenth century it occupied a square of a parasang and a half ; but soon falling into decay, it was rebuilt and repeopled by Gazan Khan, and became the occasional residence of the good Shah Rokh, grandson of Timur. From that time it sank gradually into neglect, and is now a heap of ruins covering a great extent of ground, among which the village of Shah Abdulazeem alone flourishes,—a green spot amid the surrounding desolation.

From Teheran to Casbin, a distance of ninety-six miles, the road leads through a long valley better cultivated than usual, of which the Elburz forms the northern boundary. The latter was founded by Shapoor Zoolactaf, and previous to the reign of Shah Abbas was the capital of the Sooffee dynasty. It is one of the largest and most commercial cities in Persia ; although when Morier visited it in 1809 it had suffered severely by an earthquake, to which calamity all the towns at the foot of these mountains are subject. A strong wind blowing from the north, and called the Baud e Caucasian, renders the climate rather too cold in spring, although it refreshes the air in summer.

Sultanieh, eighty-six miles farther to the westward, once a noble city, is now but a village in an extensive plain, which in summer is covered with the tents and huts of the royal army surrounding the palace of the king. The tomb of Sultan Mohammed Khodabundeh, brother of the celebrated Gazan Khan, a noble structure of brickwork, with a dome once covered with lackered tiles, forms a conspicuous object amid the ruins.

From this point a route, leading in a general direction south-south-west, carries the traveller across the country to Hamadan and Kermanshah, through mountainous tracts varied with fertile spots and pleasant valleys. The first of

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these cities, supposed to occupy the site of Ecbatana,* stands at the foot of Elwund, the ancient Orontes, the snowy peak of which forms a fine feature in the landscape, and is well contrasted with the rich cultivation and foliage that surrounds the town. It was destroyed by Timur; and though once possessed of considerable magnificence, is now a collection of clay-built houses, containing a population of about 50,000 persons. The chief objects of curiosity, besides the antiquities, are two buildings said to be the sepulchre of Esther and Mordecai, and that of the philosopher Avicenna, or, as he is called by the Persians, Abo Sinnah.

Between Hamadan and Kungawur intervenes a fertile tract held by a branch of the tribe of Affshar. The small town of Kungawur, which D'Anville considers as the Conocobar of antiquity, is remarkable for the ruins of a magnificent edifice described by Sir R. K. Porter, and by him supposed to have been the celebrated temple of Diana. A further route of fifty-two miles conducts to Kermanshah, a thriving city, exhibiting in the time of the traveller just named the advantages derived from the residence of a prince and court less dependant than others upon that of the principal sovereign. It contains about 15,000 families, and is adorned with many handsome public buildings.

Of the large expanse of country between Kermanshah and Ispahan, comprehending Louristan, we can only say that it embraces some of the most fruitful parts of Irak; although, being chiefly occupied by the wandering tribes of Lac, Feilee, and Buchtiaree, little attention is paid to agriculture. The valleys are covered with their black tents, but the villages are very rare. The only town is Korumabad, the ancient Corbiene, the capital of the Feilee chief; but to the north-east lie Hissar, Boorojird, and Nahavund.. This last is a name disastrous to Persia; for it was on the adjoining plains that the contest was decided between the votaries of Zoroaster and the followers of Mohammed, and that the last of the race of Sassan beheld the ancient banner of Iran sink before the green ensigns of his Arabian invaders.[†]

The district of Yezd is, somewhat inconsistently in a geographical point of view, considered as belonging to Irak, for

* See Kinneir's Memoir, p. 125. Porter's Travels, vol. ii. p. 104, &c.

† See Family Library, No. LXVIII. Arabia, Ancient and Modern, vol. i.

it assuredly makes part of Khorasan. It is an oasis in the vast desert which reaches from the Elburz to Kerman. The city is built in a large sandy plain nearly encompassed with hills ; but a thinly-inhabited tract, in which there are several respectable towns and villages, extends in the direction of Ispahan, from which it lies due east. In spite of the dryness of the soil and climate the territory produces good fruits, silk, and corn, but not enough of the latter to serve for more than forty days' consumption. Yezd, with all these disadvantages, is among the most prosperous cities in Persia ; and this it owes to its commerce and manufactures. It is one of the great *entrepôts* between the east and west. Caravans from Cabul, Cashmere, Bokhara, Herat, Mushed, Kerman, are met by merchants from Ishapan, Shiraz, Kashan, Teheran, and an immense interchange of commodities takes place. On the other hand, its manufactures of silk and other stuffs, its felts, sugarcandy, and sweetmeats, command a ready market everywhere. The population was stated to Captain Christie to be about 50,000 souls, and among them are 3000 families of Ghebres or followers of Zoroaster,—an industrious and patient race, who, in spite of a heavy taxation, turn their attention busily to trade and agriculture.

Kurdistan, which comprehends Assyria Proper, and part of Armenia and Media, has never, properly speaking, been subject to Persia ; for, though force or policy may have attached some chiefs to a particular prince or dynasty, its warlike tribes have, for the most part, maintained their independence. The greater portion of the country consists of mountains, sometimes of great height and utterly barren, but frequently including fertile tracts of pasture and even of cultivable land, while they are occasionally sprinkled with oak-forests, which yield excellent timber and abundance of gall-nuts. Of those leaders who profess themselves the tributaries or subjects of the Persian crown, the Prince of Ardelan is by far the most powerful.

The province which bears that name extends in length about 200 miles, in breadth 160, stretching from the plain of Hamadan to the small river Sharook. The country is either composed of hills heaped, as it were, on each other, or of great table-lands covered with the flocks and tents of the Eelauts from June till the end of August, when they remove to the vicinity of Bagdad for warmth. The glens are narrow chasms in the lower parts of the mountains, where the vil-

laces are built in situations to protect them from the inclemency of winter. The town of Senna is a romantic and flourishing place, secluded in a deep valley filled with orchards; and here, in a sumptuous palace built on a small hill in the centre of the town, lives the wallee in great state, but in a truly patriarchal style. He is an accomplished, liberal-minded man, hospitable and beloved. "It was impossible," says Colonel Macdonald Kinneir, "to contemplate this chief sitting at the head of his hall, surrounded by his friends and relations, without calling to mind the Percys and Douglases of our own country."*

AZERBIJAN or Media Atropatena (an appellation derived from a satrap, Atropatenus, who on the death of Alexander aspired successfully to sovereign power), lying now on the frontier of Persia, is of great importance. It is separated from Armenia on the north by the Aras; from Irak by the Kizzelozeen; the Caspian Sea and Ghilan bound it on the north-east, and Kurdistan on the south-east. Including Eriwan, Karabaug, and Karadaug, it is divided into twelve districts; and its capital is Tabriz or Tauris, which was a favourite residence of Haroun al Raschid, to whose wife its foundation has been attributed. This province is one of the most productive in the kingdom, and presents features which differ from those we have been describing. Its mountains are loftier and afford better pasture, while its valleys are larger than those of Fars and Irak. The villages are less ruinous, and are more pleasantly situated. Provisions and comforts abound, and nothing is wanting but a good government to render its inhabitants happy.

One of the most interesting objects in Azerbijan is the great salt lake of Urumeah or Shahee, which, according to Colonel Macdonald Kinneir, is 300 miles in circumference. It is surrounded by picturesque mountains and valleys, some of the latter being fertile and well cultivated, and has in its vicinity several celebrated towns, among which is Maragha, once the abode of Hoólaku Khan, who with his wife is supposed to be interred here. The site of the observatory of Nazir u Dien, the first astronomer of his day, can be traced.

* This fine old chief received the English envoy and his suite in princely style: the party was met three miles from the town by his eldest son at the head of 300 admirably-appointed horsemen; and the wallee himself assured Sir John Malcolm he would ever consider his visit as an epoch in the annals of his family.

on the top of a hill close to the city. There are also near it some singular caves, with altars not unlike the lingam of India. Urumeah, on the other side of the lake, the Thebarma of Strabo and the birthplace of Zoroaster, is situated in a noble plain, appears well fortified, and contains about 20,000 souls.

The finest scenery of Azerbijan, which though fertile is divested of wood and verdure, lies on the shores and mountains of that noble sheet of water. But the most remarkable fact connected with this lake is its saltiness. The nature of the salts held in solution has not been ascertained; but that they are in excess is certain from the depositions left upon the beach. In some places a perfect pavement, as it were, of the solid mineral might be seen under the shallow water to some distance from the brink; in others an incrustation of the same substance was formed, from beneath which, when broken, thick concentrated brine gushed out, and a saline efflorescence, extending in some places many hundred yards from the edge, encircled it with a belt of glittering white. The waters, which, like those of the sea, appear of a dark-blue colour streaked with green, according as the light falls upon them, are pellucid in the highest degree; but no fish or living thing is known to exist in them. It is said they have decreased within the last score of years, retiring and leaving a barren space of several thousand feet; and a village is pointed out as once having overhung the lake, which is now separated from it by a muddy strand covered with salt at least a quarter of a mile broad. The reason of this diminution does not appear; for, while there is no current outward, it continues to be fed by a great number of large streams.

To the north of Shahee lie the fine districts of Morand and Khoi. The latter is particularly fertile and well cultivated; and a town of the same name, one of the handsomest of its size in Persia, contains about 30,000 souls. The plain is celebrated as the arena of a great battle between Shah Ismael and the Ottoman emperor, Selim the First.

The north-eastern division of Azerbijan comprehends the districts of Khalkhal, Miskeen, and Ardebil. The first is rough and elevated, lying on the southern face of the mountains of Ghilan, which, with those of Talish, are a prolongation of the great Elburz chain. It affords fine hill-pasture, and presents good valleys and thriving villages, but is totally

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devoid of wood. The second, separated from Khalkhal by the magnificent range of Savalan, is of a similar character, though it possesses some noble plains, which, with that of Ardebil, run into the low land of the Karasu, and with it sink into the extensive steppe of the Chowul Mogan. This flat, the encamping-ground of so many Eastern conquerors, and the scene chosen by Nadir Shah for the finishing act of the drama that placed the crown of Persia on his head, still produces rich and luxuriant herbage, and nourishes the same species of venomous serpents which arrested the victorious career of Pompey the Great.

Ardebil itself is a wretched place, remarkable, however, as the family-seat of the royal house of Sooffee, and for the tombs of Sheik Sooffee and Shah Ismael. There is also a fort built on the principles of European science, with regular bastions, ditch, glacis, and drawbridges, which is a greater curiosity in Persia than the mausoleum of a saint. It is said that this stronghold cost 160,000*l.* 'sterling.'

The approach from Ardebil to Tabriz is picturesque. From a height above the latter the eye is greeted by a mass of fine foliage spangled with white dwellings, forming the gardens which skirt the bank of a stream that flows past the town. Close under this verdant screen stands the city, with its old palace and several domes and minarets rising above the flat mud roofs. Beyond lies the extensive plain, undulating in the hot vapours of noon, and terminating in the lake Shahee; while remote ranges of lofty mountains bound the view, or melt into extreme distance.

This city is the seat of government of Abbas Mirza, the heir of the crown, and is interesting from the attempts made by that prince to introduce some improvements into certain branches of the public service. It enjoys a portion of that prosperity which the countenance of the sovereign always bestows; its commerce is good, its bazaars well filled, and its population is great, though fluctuating. In the days of Chardin it boasted of 300 caravansaries, 250 mosques, and 500,000 inhabitants,—of late the number has been rated variously, at fifty, eighty, and a hundred thousand; probably when at the fullest it may reach this last amount. The cold is intense in winter, and the snow has been known to lie near Tabriz six months without intermission.

The low tract which stretches along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea from the plains of Mogan to Astrabad, and

from thence eastward along the foot of the Elburz, is very different from the more elevated plateau of Persia ; being marshy, covered with forests which clothe the mountains nearly to their summits, extremely verdant and fruitful, and though liable to the disorders which a damp climate and the exhalations of stagnant water are apt to produce, more than commonly populous. Frequent rains prevail, and the waters are discharged by a number of streams, which at times become destructive and impassable torrents. The ground is for the most part naturally or artificially flooded more than half the year. A high-road formed by Shah Abbas, in the usual substantial style of that monarch's works, is the only one through this extensive district. It appears to have been fifteen or sixteen feet wide, and constructed by filling a deep trench with gravel and small stones,* over which a regular causeway was very firmly built. It commenced at Kiskar, the western extremity of Ghilan, and, running through that province, Mazuanderan, and Astrabad, ascended a pass leading to Bostam in Khorasan, and was carried to a point within forty-five miles of Mushed. In many places the water lies upon it to the depth of several feet, but even with this disadvantage the hardness of the bottom renders it preferable to any other path. As time and want of repair, however, have interrupted the continuity of this great thoroughfare, caravans frequently travel along the beach. The villages differ from those of other provinces, the houses being built in clusters of two or three in the mighty forest in which they are buried, and communicating by paths known only to the inhabitants ; so that the traveller, while he sees nothing but a wooden or grass-built hut, like those in the commencement of an American clearing, may be actually in the midst of a population of one thousand persons, who would all assemble at a moment's warning. Nothing, indeed, can be imagined more impracticable to an invading foe than the general nature of the country ; and it is singular that, brave and expert in the use of their arms as the Ghilanese are, they have opposed so slight a resistance to the sovereign, and have contributed so essentially to his revenues. The collection of government-dues is not so difficult here as else-

* Hanway makes it broader ; but its present appearance does not bear out the opinion.

where, and if little goes to the treasury the fault does not lie with the ryots. But although dense forests prevail on the shores of the Caspian, the prospect sometimes opens and displays scenery which, for beauty and interest, cannot be surpassed in any part of the world,—large cornfields, divided by excellent fences and hedges, varied with copse-wood,—orchards and groves, from among which the neat cottages of a village often peep out, and fine swelling lawns, with noble park-like trees dotting their green surface or running up the hill-sides in natural glades. Such are the views which mingle with the bolder features of the towering mountains and the swelling bays and blue waters of that inland sea:

The alpine ranges are inhabited by tribes only slightly civilized, but who possess some of the virtues of highlanders, being true to their chiefs, hospitable, bold, and active : they are, however, daring robbers, and do not scruple to shed blood. The natives of Talish, the north-western district, who resemble the Lesghées of Shirwan and Daghistan, are particularly savage and reckless. They are good marksmen, and maintain a great degree of independence in spite of the efforts of the Persian government, which by obtaining hostages endeavours to hold them in awe.

The tract we have been describing contains three provinces, GHILAN, Mazunderan, and Astrabad. The capital town of the first, anciently the country of the Ghels, is Resht, which contains from 60,000 to 80,000 souls, and enjoys a considerable commerce in silk and other articles. Its bazaars are extensive, clean, and well kept. They are paved, but, like most others in Persia, not entirely protected from the weather ; and in them at all times may be seen many foreigners passing along with an air of business, while a general hum and bustle prevail which argue a brisk trade. Enzellee, the shipping port, is inconsiderable, but possesses an excellent harbour, completely landlocked by a sandbank in front, and capable of accommodating many more vessels than ever enter it. The most singular inconsistency is the want of a road to this place, which is about twelve miles from Reah. The dépôt for goods is at Peeree bazaar, and every thing must be transported on the backs of mules, which frequently sink up to the belly in the devious tract through the marshy forest. Ghilan has no other town except Lahajan, which contains about 15,000 inhabitants ; but there are sev-

eral stations called bazaars, where fairs are held periodically; of these Fomen, Massouleh, Kiskar, and Teregoram are the most deserving of notice.

MAZUNDERAN, the ancient Hyrcania, though less valuable than Ghilan in point of productions is more celebrated. Its three chief towns are Saree, Amol, and Balfroosh ; of which the first is the capital, and represents the ancient Zadra-carta. It bears no marks of having ever been large ; the walls, which are of mud, with square brick towers, have a circuit of not more than two miles ; and its population, although it is the residence of a prince and his court, does not exceed forty thousand souls. It is irregularly built, and the streets are unpaved and often impassable in bad weather ; the bazaars are miserable huts, having little appearance of trade. There is a tower about a hundred feet high, formed of curious brickwork, and ornamented with belts of Cufic inscriptions, from which it is understood to be the tomb of Hissam u Dowlut, one of the Dilemee dynasty, who died in the fifth century of the Hejira.* This monument, with one or two other imamzadehs, are doubtless the structures taken by Hanway for temples of the ancient fire-worshippers. The ruins of Furrahbad, a royal residence erected by Shah Abbas, lie at the mouth of the Tedjen river, which passes Saree, and seventeen miles distant from that town. They exhibit the remains of a noble palace with its harem and pleasure-houses, a fine mosque, and a bazaar. The buildings were constructed in a solid style ; but such is the effect of the moist climate in this province, that they are now all reduced to heaps of rubbish, or are so overgrown with weeds that they must soon become so.

The only object of interest at Amol is the mausoleum of Seyed Quwam u Dien, a pious sovereign of Mazunderan, who flourished in the eighth century of the Hejira. It was erected by Shah Abbas, who was one of his descendants by the female line. The town contains about as many inhabitants as Saree ; but in the summer they retire to their yealaks in the mountains.

Balfroosh, the third in order, is by far the most important and interesting, because it affords a proof unparalleled in Persia of the creative powers of trade. It exhibits the grati-

* See Price's *Mahomedanism*, vol. ii. p. 252, *et seq.* for an account of the Dilemites.

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fying spectacle of a city purely commercial, peopled wholly with merchants, mechanics, and their dependants, who enjoy a great degree of prosperity and happiness. There is not a khan or noble in the place ; even the governor is a trader ; and there is a plain and simple air of ease, plenty, and comfort, attended with a bustle and show of business, which resembles the mercantile towns of India rather than one in the despotic land of Persia. Its population has not been ascertained, and it is impossible to acquire an idea of its extent from what the eye can comprehend at any one point of view, owing to the density of the forest. The inhabitants compare it in size to Ispahan ; but the appearance of the bazaars, and the acknowledged number of houses in the various divisions, lead to the conclusion that it contains a population of not less than 200,000. The shipping-place is Mushed e Sir, at the mouth of the Bawul ; and here, as in all the rivers of Ghilan and Mazunderan, are caught a great number of sturgeon, which forms an important article of export to Russia. Salmon is also occasionally taken.

ASTRABAD is a small province, divided on the south from Khorasan by the Elburz Mountains, while on the north it is bounded by the Caspian Sea and the desert which stretches to its shores. Its capital, of the same name, is believed to owe its origin to Yezzid ibn Mehloob, an Arab general, who flourished towards the end of the first century of the Mohammedan era. Its circuit is about three miles and a half ; it is defended by a lofty and thick but ruinous wall ; the streets are generally well paved, and have a drain in the centre ; the bazaar is large, but poorly filled ; and there are no public buildings worthy of observation. Wood being abundant, the houses here, as well as in Mazunderan and Ghilan, are often wholly constructed of it, and thatched with tiles ; and this in Astrabad, where the villages are less buried in forest, though still mingled with trees, produces a pleasing effect, totally opposed to the monotonous appearance of the mud hovels of Upper Persia. Many of the better edifices have baudegers or wind-towers, to cool the apartments during the heats of summer.

About sixty miles west of Astrabad lies Ashruff, the favourite residence of Shah Abbas,—a detailed description of which may be found in Hanway, and in a work by the author of these pages.*

* Travels on the Banks of the Caspian Sea. Vide also p. 178, *infra*.

The eastern part of Astrabad, now called Gourgan, the Jorjan of some authors, but undoubtedly connected with the ancient name Hyrcania, is a plain, partly wooded and partly covered with the finest pasture, and watered by a river of its own name, as well as by the Attruck and many lesser streams. Vestiges of former population are thickly spread over its surface; but the Turkomans first ravaged, and then occupied it as a grazing-ground for their flocks and herds.

An ancient tower, called Goombuz e Caos, stands on a little hillock, probably artificial, in the wide plain, and is seen from an immense distance. It is of exquisite brickwork, and except at the bottom, where a mischievous attempt has been made to demolish it, is in as perfect a condition as when first built. The walls are ten feet thick, and the height is about 150. It is hollow; the cavity being undivided to the very top, where a single window in the conical roof gives light to the whole. Its origin is obvious; for it is inscribed with two belts of Arabic characters, though now so much defaced as not to be legible; and it stands among green mounds, said to be the ruins of Jorjan.

The extent of KHORASAN, like that of the empire, of which it forms the eastern frontier, has varied with political events; being held by some as comprehending all from Irak to the Oxus and the Indus, including not only Bactriana and part of Sogdiana, but also the whole of Afghanistan. We shall consider it as terminating on the north and east in the line already laid down as the general boundary of the empire. Unlike the rest of that country, in physical as well as political characteristics, this vast province, in former times the seat of a great empire, rich in men and cultivation, presents at this day an endless succession of barren plains, thinly inhabited, and separated by mountains; while the whole country is governed by petty chiefs, who by turns defy and conciliate the ruling power of Persia. The only district yielding implicit obedience is that which occupies the skirts of the Elburz Mountains from the boundary of Irak to Mushed, including the cities of Semnoon, Damghan, Bostam, Subzawar, Nishapour, and their dependencies, some of which are fertile and well cultivated. The last-mentioned place, of old one of the most important in the empire, founded by Shapoor Zoolactaf, was the centre of a territory which contained

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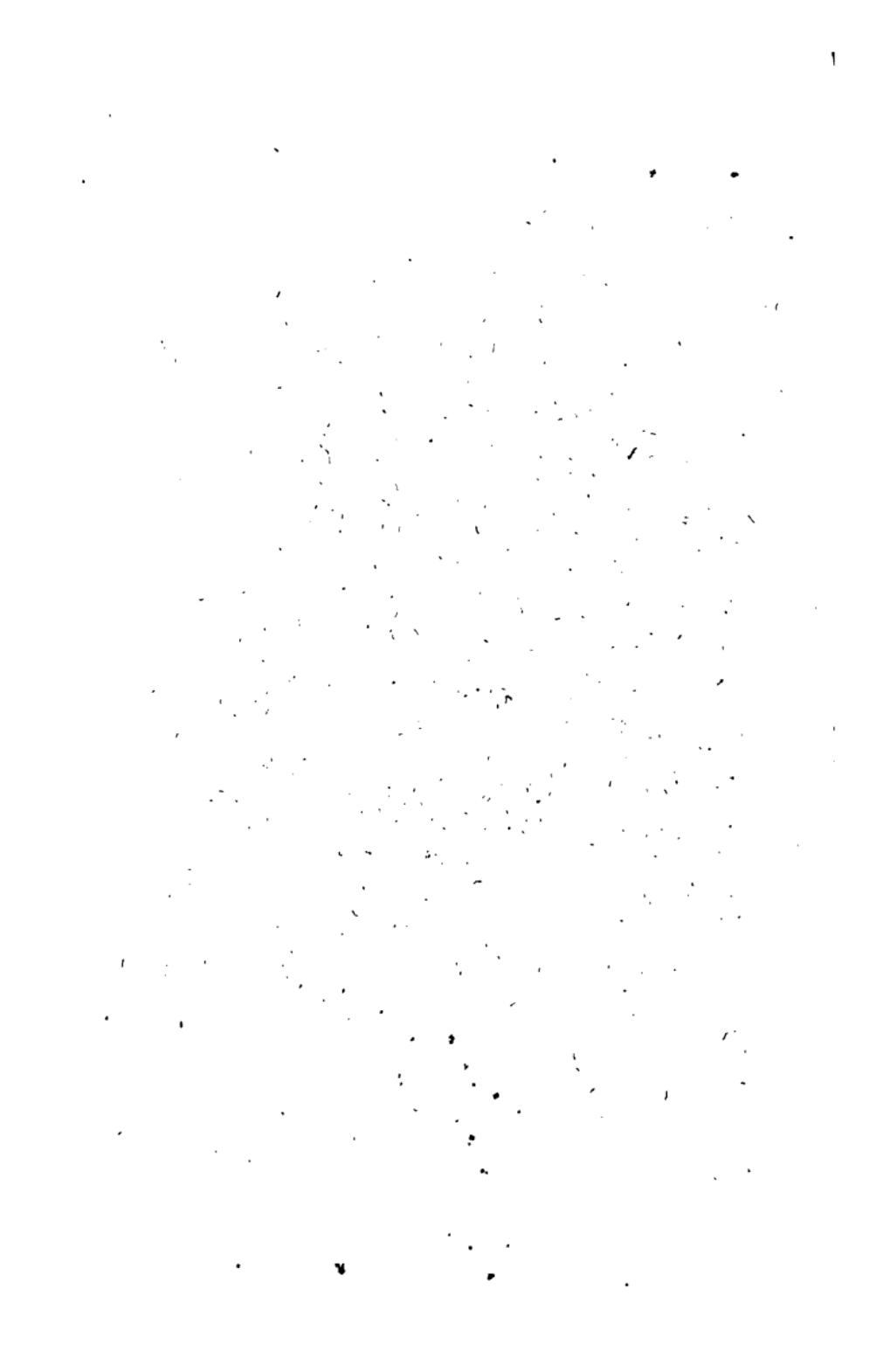
14,000 villages, and was watered by 12,000 cannauts or subterraneous canals, besides natural streams. Ever the object of plunder, and often destroyed, it always rose from its ashes, till, at length, totally depopulated in the last Afghan invasion, it remained till lately a heap of ruins. In 1821 it could scarcely boast of 5000 inhabitants; though the multitude of ruined villages, and the innumerable lines of abandoned cannauts, justified the accounts of its former prosperity, and told an impressive tale of misfortune and oppression.

Mashed, the capital of Persian Khorasan, rose out of the decay of the ancient Toos, the ruins of which lie but seventeen miles distant. The plan of the city is by some attributed to the Emperor Humaicon, while he was a guest of Shah Tamasp; but its greatness is undoubtedly owing to the resort of pilgrims to the tomb of Imam Reza. Nadir Shah bestowed upon it much of his dangerous favour, and enriched the shrine with a bounty which still gilds its remains. Though containing scarcely 100,000 souls, it has numerous mosques and mollahs; and they reckon sixteen madressas, some of which are really magnificent, while others are degraded into stables and cattle-pens.

The shrine and its appendages occupy a position in the centre of the principal street,—a fine broad avenue, having in the middle a canal, once shaded with trees. The entry to this holy place is by a quadrangle, called the Sahn, 160 yards long by seventy-five broad; it is paved with gravestones, for all the noble and pious of the land are desirous of burial within its precincts. It is surrounded with a double row of arched niches, all superbly ornamented with lacquered tiles, and at either end stands a lofty gateway embellished in the same fashion, which is probably the most perfect specimen of the kind in the world. Neither Jew nor Christian is permitted to intrude into this magnificent square under pain of death. From the side of the Sahn a gilded archway admits the pilgrim to the mausoleum, the exact form of which it is not possible to ascertain, on account of the meaner buildings that surround it. A silver gate, the gift of Nadir Shah, opens into the chief apartment, which rises like the centre nave of a cathedral into a noble dome, and branches out in the form of a cross. The whole is adorned with tiles of the richest colours, profuse of azure and gold, disposed in the most tasteful devices, while from the centre depends a large branched candlestick of solid silver. The dome is covered



An Imamzadeh, or Tomb of a Descendant of an Imam, near
Saree in Mazunderan.



with gilded tiles ; and from two points,—one near the shrine and one on the opposite side of the Sahn,—rise two lofty minarets, the lowest parts of which are cased with an azure coating, while the upper parts and the galleries round the top are richly gilt,—assuredly the most beautiful things of this description in the whole empire. A doorway, in the left arch to the north-west, leads into another apartment, richly decorated and surmounted with a dome, under which repose the remains of Imam Reza and of the celebrated Haroun al Raschid. The shrine is encircled by a railing of wrought steel, inside of which is an incomplete one of solid gold, and many other glittering objects. It would be endless to detail the splendour of the various parts of this mausoleum, as dimly seen by the light of lamp and taper. Combined with the reverential silence, only interrupted by the deep intonations of Arabic prayers or recitations from the Koran, and with the solemn mummary of the mollahs, it is quite enough to impress with unmingled awe the ignorant pilgrims who flock thither for the purposes of devotion.

Another passage leads through the mausoleum into a court belonging to a mosque of the greatest beauty, founded by the wife of Shah Rokh, the grandson of Timur. The screen, in which is placed the chief archway, the dome, and minarets, are all tastefully adorned with the usual material of coloured tiles.

The government of Mushed, which is placed in the hands of one of the king's sons, under the superintendence of an able minister, extends its authority but a little way to the north or south. The country between the line we have formerly indicated and the desert to the north is chiefly occupied by a colony of Kurds, transported by Shah Abbas from the Turkish frontier to that of Persian Khorasan, bordering on the Uzbeck states. These people have multiplied, and form three distinct states, each under its own chief, who all maintain the manners of their forefathers, together with their rude independence, paying no tribute unless when it is demanded at the head of an army. The most powerful of them resides at Khabooshan, about nine miles west-north-west of Mushed, and is dignified with the title of Eel-khanee or Lord of the Eeliants. In this quarter is situated the celebrated fortress of Kelast Nadiree, which is a valley from fifty to sixty miles long by twelve or fifteen in breadth, surrounded by mountains so steep that a little

assistance from art has rendered them quite impassable, the rocks being scarped outside into the form of a gigantic wall. A stream runs through this hollow; and its entrance and outlet, the only points of access, are fortified by walls and towers which are deemed impregnable. It contains twenty or thirty villages, two thousand families, and presents an extended cultivation. In 1822, this stronghold was possessed by a chief named Seyed Mohammed, who like others had declared himself independent.

The famous city of Meru, often the seat of empire and the abode of luxury, but now a mass of ruins, is not within the limits assigned to Persia, being nearly equidistant from Mushed and Bokhara—an oasis in the desert—yet it is impossible to pass it unmentioned. A petty chief maintains the place for the sovereign of Bokhara, and hordes of Turkomans encamp round the walls. Its glory has passed away, and even the site of the tomb of Alp Arslan is unknown.*

To the south of Mushed, in a well-cultivated district, is Toorbut, the residence of the powerful ruler of the Karaoeee tribe, who occasionally assists, but more frequently overawes the imbecile government; and, in concert with other predatory leaders, lays caravans under contribution at discretion. The town contains from 30,000 to 40,000 souls, and enjoys a considerable transit-trade, being on the high road from India to the principal cities of Persia.

Herat, the imperial seat of the descendants of Timur, is situated in a well-watered valley, thirty miles in length and fifteen in breadth, the whole of which is covered with villages and gardens. The former splendour of this capital† has for the most part passed away. The present city, according to Captain Christie, occupies an area of about four miles, and is surrounded by a lofty mud wall and wet ditch, with drawbridges and outworks. From the Charsu, a large square in its centre, proceed bazaars at right angles to the four respective gates, the principal one being covered with a vaulted roof, and these on market-days are scarcely passable for the crowd. Among the numerous public buildings the Musjed e Jumah

* See Family Library, No. XLVII. Historical and Descriptive Account of British India, vol. i.

† For an elaborate description of Herat in its glory, see Major Price's Retrospect of Mohammedanism, vol. iii. p. 640.

stands conspicuous, with its domes and minarets, once ornamented superbly, but now going to decay, though it still covers, with its reservoirs, courts, and arcades, an area of 800 yards square. The private dwellings are in good order, the population is dense, and the commerce thriving.

After many vicissitudes, Herat, in 1749, fell into the hands of Ahmed Shah Abdallee, and has since remained attached to the crown of Cabul. But in the late revolutions, the city and its dependencies were seized by the Vizier Futeh Khan and his brothers, who in their turn were dispossessed ; and it then became the retreat of the nominal monarch Mahmoud Shah. It has of late been held by him and his son Camran Mirza, who, though they raise large sums by an oppressive government, pay to Persia a very small annual tribute.

Our information regarding Kerman, Seistan, Mekran, and Beloochistan (which is sometimes considered as a part of Mekran) is derived from Captains Grant and Christie, and Lieutenant Pottinger, who, in 1810, volunteered to explore these extensive regions, and, at extreme personal hazard, traversed them in three several directions. The first of these officers having landed at Gwuttur, made his way to Bunpore, and thence regaining the coast, marched along the shore, visiting every town and village as far as Bunder Abbas. The two others, having debarked at Sonneanee, a little westward of the mouths of the Indus, travelled to Kelat, the chief town of Beloochistan ; and from thence to Nooschee, a small village on the borders of the Great Desert. There they separated ; and the former, taking a northern course, proceeded through the heart of Seistan to Herat, and thence by Yezd to Ispahan. The latter pursued a south-western direction to Bunpore, where, turning to the north-west, he passed through the remainder of Mekran to Kerman and Shiraz. Thus a somewhat accurate idea has been obtained of this vast and savage region ; and only those who have travelled among a people utterly reckless of human life, and through countries where the extremities of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, increase the horrors of the desert, can appreciate the toils of those resolute individuals who have thus added to our store of information.

KERMAN, the ancient Caramania, has Seistan and Khorasan on the north ; Mekran and the Gulf on the south ; with Laristan, Fars, and Irak on the west. According to

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Pottinger, it is exceedingly mountainous and barren. "There is not," observes he, "a river in the province; and were it not for a few springs in the mountainous districts, and the kahrezes or [subterraneous] aqueducts, the natives could not possibly exist. As it is, water is procured with extraordinary pains, and withal is not more than sufficient to cultivate a very trifling portion of the soil;" and all this, although snow lies on the mountain-tops for the greater part of the year. Kerman is generally divided into the desert and habitable regions. The former is so impregnated with salt that sometimes not a blade of grass is to be found in a stretch of ninety miles; and there is no water. Whole armies have perished in this frightful waste; and so great is the danger, even to those acquainted with the routes, that a courier demanded a sum of 200 rupees,—a little fortune in such a place,—for carrying a letter from Kerman to Herat. In the whole tract there is but one green spot, where was built the town of Khubbees, in order to facilitate the trade between the northern and southern provinces. But that place has gone to decay; and its inhabitants have become robbers, subsisting on the plunder of those whom it was intended they should protect. The most fertile portion of the habitable division of Kerman is Noormanshir, which is about ninety miles long by thirty wide; where the soil, consisting of a rich black mould watered by mountain-streams, yields an abundant produce, sufficient for a population far more dense than exists in any other part of the province. On the coast there are considerable date-plantations; nor is there any great deficiency of forage and water. The capital is in the centre of a large and well-cultivated plain; and Sheher e Babec, the ruins of a once splendid town, lies cradled amid a profusion of the most prolific fruit-gardens in Persia.

Kerman, a city of great antiquity, was one of the most flourishing in the empire. Situated on the direct road from most of the large towns of the north, to Ormuz, and afterward to Bander Abbas, the great emporiums of oriental trade, it enjoyed a lucrative commerce. But its riches rendered it a tempting object of plunder; and of the many conquerors and tyrants who have infested Persia, there is scarcely one at whose hands it has not suffered. In the struggles between the Zund and Kujur families, after being bravely defended by Lootf Ali Khan Zund, the last of the

line, it was basely betrayed into the hands of Aga Mohammed Khan, by whom its male inhabitants were slaughtered or horribly mutilated,—its women and children given over to the most revolting slavery,—its buildings and fortifications destroyed. To commemorate this final blow to the fortunes of his adversary, the victor resolved to erect a trophy worthy of the event. Selecting from his captives 900 men, he decapitated 600, and forced the survivors to carry the gory heads of their comrades to an appointed place, where they also underwent the same fate; and the whole were piled into a pyramid of sculls, which remained when Pottinger visited the spot.

Having been rebuilt, though on a reduced scale, it is now the residence of a prince of the blood and governor of the province. Its population amounts to 30,000 souls: the bazaars are handsome and well filled, and trade, which is reviving, might, but for the evil genius of tyranny, become once more considerable. The wool of Kerman is celebrated for its fineness; and its manufactures of shawls, felts, and matchlocks are in request all over Persia. But its prosperity was so dependant on Gombroon that it can never again be what it once was. Of the latter, also called Bunder Abbas, once a proud child of commerce, the site is now occupied by a collection of miserable huts inhabited by 3000 or 4000 Arabs. The ruins of the former town and fort, as well as those of the English and Dutch factories, are still conspicuous.* Parcels of sulphur and red ochre, articles of trade in those days, may yet be seen strewed about the banks of a small creek which formed the shipping-place; and European coins and trinkets are often found by the natives. A group of domes, obelisks, and pillars marks the spot where those of our countrymen who breathed their last on this inhospitable shore rest from their labours, far from their brethren and their homes; and the impressive silence of the scene, with its traces of departed greatness; withered hopes, and disappointed ambition, suggests solemn thoughts to the reflective mind.

The small province of SEISTAN, also called Neemroze, and comprehending the country of the ancient Sarangeans, has Khorasan on the north and north-west; Candahar on the

* The present Arab fort is built on the site of the Dutch factory.

east ; Mekran and Kerman on the south and south-west. It is a desert of sand and rocks, through which one fine river, the Heermund, holds its course, producing a strip of rich land, about two miles broad, on either side of which rise perpendicular cliffs. It affords fine pasture, is partly cultivated, and numerous ruins denote its former prosperity. Doo-shakh or Jellalabad, the present capital,—probably the Zaranga of Ptolemy,—is a small place rebuilt among the remains of a city which covers as much ground as Ispahan. The houses, formed of half-burned bricks, are two stories high, and have vaulted roofs. Between Rodhar, where Captain Christie entered Seistan, and Dooshakh, many decayed windmills were observed. The Heermund, after running through the province in a stream from 200 to 400 yards broad, is lost in the Lake Zerrah,—a shallow sheet of water, which in the dry season is covered with reeds and rushes. It is full of fish and wild-fowl, and in it is a high island on which was a fortified town, Kookhozeid, the depository in dangerous times of the treasures of the principal families of the province.

Seistan is now scantily peopled by tribes of Afghans and Belooches, who wander from place to place, pitching their tents among the ruins of ancient palaces, and are at once shepherds and robbers. Their chiefs live in fortified villages on the banks of the Heermund, and employ themselves in constant forays. The nominal ruler, when Captain Christie made his visit, was Baharam Khan Kyanee ; but his revenue did not exceed 30,000 rupees a year, nor was his authority sufficient to restrain the depredations of Khan Juhan Khan, an enterprising man who lived at Illumdar close to Jellalabad, and laid all the country under contribution. Such is now the condition of that province which produced the heroes of the Shah Nameh,—of Zal and Roostum,—and of many other celebrated worthies of less questionable existence.

The large but barren and inhospitable province of Mekran,—the ancient Gedrosia,—which extends from the mouths of the Indus to Cape Jask, exhibits every variety of desert, in hill, rock, or plain, intermingled with some tracts where a river or brook enables the thinly-scattered inhabitants to raise a small supply of food, and to find pasture for their flocks and herds. A long range of mountains running east and west separates this province into two parts. The southern portion

retains the name of Mekran ; the northern has acquired that of Beloochistan, though it might more properly be regarded as forming another province.

Mekran and Beloochistan, as well as Seistan, are peopled by a variety of tribes, whose chiefs are more or less independent. Of these clans the Belooches are by far the most numerous, and, according to Pottinger, consist of two distinct classes, the Belooches and the Brahooes. The first, who speak a language resembling modern Persian, are divided into three principal sections, and these again are minutely subdivided. The men are middle-sized, spare yet muscular, bold and robust, but savage and predatory ; and though they are heard to boast of bloodshed, plunder, and devastation committed in the chappows, they nevertheless despise pilfering,—are hospitable, true to their word, and not devoid of generosity. They live in ghedans or tents formed of black felt stretched over a frame of tamariak branches. From ten to thirty of these constitute a toomun or village, and its inhabitants a kheil or society, which is usually named after some person or fanciful attribute,—as Dacodee Kheil, David's Society ; Umeree' Kheil, the Noble Society ; and so on. The people are indolent but inquisitive, temperate and sober ; restricting themselves commonly to two wives, and even their chiefs being content with four. They treat their women with respect, and do not confine them so rigidly as other Mohamemedans. The captives taken in the chappows are made slaves, who after being domesticated are used with kindness, and speedily become reconciled to their fate. "Why should they wish to leave us ?" replied the Sirdar or chief of Nooskee to Captain Christie, who had inquired how they were prevented from escaping ; "they are well fed and clothed, and treated like the other members of my family,—they want for nothing. Come what will, they get a share of what I have ; and they know that the more they work the better we shall all fare. They have no cares : now, at home they would have to think of house, and food, and clothes, and might possibly starve after all. No, no ; the worst punishment we can inflict on a refractory fellow is to turn him about his business."

The Brahooes, like their neighbours, are divided into an infinity of tribes and kheils, and are still more addicted to the wandering and pastoral life. They inhabit the moun-

tains which bound Beloochistan to the east, and in winter often come down to the plains of Cutch Gundava. They surpass the Belooches in hardihood, are more frugal and industrious, better farmers, quieter and less prone to rapine, not so avaricious, revengeful, or cruel. They are faithful, grateful, hospitable ; and their courage being acknowledged, they are seldom molested. They are shorter and stouter, have round faces, flatter features, and their hair and beards, instead of being black, are not unfrequently brown. They are very voracious, and live much upon animal food. They pay a far greater degree of deference to their chiefs ; but in most other respects their manners and customs resemble the Belooches. Lieutenant Pottinger leans to an opinion, that these last derive their origin from a residue of the Seljuk Turkmans, driven by the tide of conquest into this remote quarter : while the Brahoes might lay claim to an earlier possession of their mountain homes. But we may observe, that there is in many particulars an analogy between the Belooche tribes and those of more settled habits in Persia ; while the Brahoes may be supposed to represent the Eeliants. The distinguishing difference between the population of the two countries is, that in Beloochistan there is no class of fixed inhabitants like the citizens of Persia ; for the Dehwars* or villagers, found in Kelat and some neighbouring districts, are too few and too small to be taken into account. The intractable nature of the soil, and the predatory character of its possessors, account for the deficiency ; and the continued residence of Hindoo merchants, in almost every village of importance, serves rather as a proof of their devotion to gain, than of the protection they receive, or of the encouragement afforded to commerce and civilization.

The first part of this province visited by Messrs. Christie and Pottinger was the small state of Lus, supposed by Macdonald Kinneir to be the country of the Oritæ of Arrian. It is a sandy plain hemmed in by lofty mountains, and producing abundant crops. From its chief, Jam Mohammed Khan, who resides at Bela (a poor town of 1500 houses),

* Lieutenant Pottinger thinks this class may probably be descendants of the Ghebres, but they rather resemble the Taujucks of Kabul ; they are a mild agricultural people, and occupy lands free of rent, in consideration of services which they are bound to render to the Khan of Kelat.

the travellers received much kindness, although they appeared in the humble character of agents to a Hindoo merchant, for the purchase of horses. He did all in his power to facilitate their progress to Kelat; and to obviate the dangers of the enterprise, consigned them to the charge of Ruhmul Khan, a chief of the Bezunga Belooches. But that ruffian did not fail to take advantage of their necessities, and even to menace their personal safety. At one moment the wild freebooter swore by his beard, that had they entered his country without leave he would have cut them in pieces, and in the next breath he invited them to pass a week at his village. When they remarked, that they had hoped, as inoffensive travellers, to pass unmolested through his territories, he replied with a grim laugh, "How could you dream of such a thing? not even a hare can enter Ruhmul Khan's country against his will—but you now have his word for your safety, and need fear nothing mortal—for the rest we are all in the hands of God!" In the districts through which they passed, his followers took whatever they wanted, while the terrified owners looked on, not daring even to remonstrate.

A march of nearly 300 miles carried the party to Kelat. Their way lay through a succession of mountain-passes, barren plains, river-courses full of jungle, and occasional toomuns or towns belonging to chiefs nominally subject to the khan, but all of them exercising an independent authority. Meer Mohammed Khan Kumburanee, the hereditary descendant of six successive rulers, the first of whom had snatched the sovereign power from a Hindoo rajah, was the chief of Kelat when Lieutenant Pottinger reached that place; and his dominions embraced the large districts of Jhalewan and Sarewan, Cutch Gundava, Zuchree, and some others of less importance. But his easy and unsteady character was unfitted to the vigorous maintenance of power. His revenues did not exceed 350,000 rupees, though his troops nominally amounted to about 30,000 men. The two first districts present to view a mass of tremendous mountains, intersected by plains which, in spite of their forbidding appearance, produce abundance of wheat, barley, and other grains. The territory of Cutch Gundava, again, embraces a flat 150 miles long and forty or fifty in breadth, consisting of a rich black mould, which affords valuable crops of indigo,

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madder, cotton, and all sorts of grain ; but the blessing of soil and moisture is counterbalanced by the occasional prevalence of the pestilential simoom, which proves fatal to many of the inhabitants. Kelat contains about 7000 souls, of whom 500 are Hindoos. Its bazaar is well supplied, and it enjoys a considerable trade.

After a vexatious delay the travellers quitted that place, and performing a journey of seventy-nine miles in a north-westerly course, through a barren mountainous country, reached Nooskee, where they separated,—Captain Christie proceeding, as has been already mentioned, to Herat. Nooskee, which is a small sandy tract, about thirty-six miles square, watered by the Kysur, lies at the foot of the Kelat Mountains. It overlooks the great desert, which stretches like an ocean to the west and north-west for several hundred miles, embracing the oasis of Seistan, and overspreading with hopeless barrenness the greater part of Kerman and Khorasan. In its toomun, composed of the usual ghedans, resided Eidel Khan, the Sirdar, who, when the travellers took up their quarters in his Mehman Knaneh, or Guest Chamber, and threw themselves on his hospitality, received them with kindness. He did not, however, on that account, think himself bound to abstain from the attempt to turn their necessities to his own advantage ; nor was it without considerable cost, as well as difficulty, that Lieutenant Pottinger at length was permitted to enter upon his arduous journey across the desert to Bunpore. The fatigues and dangers he underwent for upwards of three weeks were such as few could have supported. During three days the party had to travel sixty-eight miles across a waste of red impalpable sand raised by the wind into huge waves, like those of a tempestuous sea, over which the camels could only climb with extreme toil, slipping down the abrupt sides as the crests of running sand broke under them, while the riders were forced to pursue their painful course on foot. During the heat of noon, their distress was increased by clouds of dust that floated in the air, without wind or any perceptible cause, and which, entering the mouth and nostrils, parched the throat and tongue, exciting an oppressive sense of suffocation, and increasing to excess the miseries of constant thirst.

This tedious journey brought Lieutenant Pottinger to a district divided among petty chiefs, where he travelled some-

times as the agent of a Hindoo merchant, sometimes as a hajji or pilgrim ; while at other times circumstances induced him to avow his European connexions. By the chief of Bunpore, a fort containing about 100 wretched habitations, and situated in an extensive plain indifferently cultivated, he was treated with great inhospitality, and compelled to make presents which he could ill spare : on the other hand, the ruler of Basmin, in the same neighbourhood, though master of but a petty hold and small territory, rendered him all possible assistance.

Another journey of 170 miles,—painful from the utter want of water, and perilous on account of ferocious banditti, carried Mr. Pottinger to Noormanshir in Kerman, whence he made his way to the capital of the province. The deserts traversed between the latter place and Nooskee, like others in these countries, at all times perilous, are in the hotter months frequently visited by blasts of the simoom, which crack and shrivel up the skin and flesh, occasioning all the agony of scorching ; while, from the gaping rents, the dark and distempered blood pours out in quantities that soon occasion death. In some cases life seems at once dried up, while the corpse, changed to a putrid mass, separates limb from limb on being touched. The only method of avoiding this pestilential vapour, the approach of which cannot always be foreseen, is to fall upon the earth, covering the body with whatever garments may be at hand till the blast pass by. The Sahrab, or Water of the Desert, is another phenomenon of the wastes equally well known, and most painful from the disappointment it occasions ; for it usually appears in low spots, where water might reasonably be expected, and so perfect is the deception, that mountains and rocks are reflected in the fallacious fluid as in a real lake.

Mekran Proper is mountainous and barren, containing, like Beloochistan, some tracts less arid than the desert around them, which yield a little grain and pasture. The coast in some places produces dates and corn ; but it is so hot, that in summer the inhabitants scarce venture out of their huts, and the fiery wind scorches all vegetable life. Of the numerous torrents which furrow the mountains, and tear up the plains in the winter or rainy season, not one retains a drop of water in summer ; and their beds are usually thickets of babul-trees, tamarisk, and other shrubs. No country can be

imagined more ungenial and forbidding ; and the natives are a puny, unsightly, and unhealthy race,—dissipated and sensual, addicted, both men and women, to every vice and excess, including that of habitual drunkenness. They are all robbers and plunderers, utterly devoid of compassion, and reckless of human blood ; and those who occupy the mountains bordering on Beloochistan are yet more ferocious and treacherous than their neighbours, without any of their redeeming qualities. The province is divided into districts, each governed by some petty chief ; for, though the Khan of Kelat is nominal sovereign of the whole country, he has no real power in its southern quarters.

This extensive region possesses a great variety of climate. The coast of Mekran and the sandy deserts suffer the utmost degree of heat ; and the snow, which perpetually covers the peaks of its northern mountains, betokens the extreme of an opposite temperature. In many parts the cold is excessive ; and heavy falls of snow and sleet often endanger the safety of travellers. But many of the mountainous districts of Beloochistan may boast of atmosphere little, if at all, inferior to that of Europe. The heat is never too great, and the seasons follow each other in regular succession. Crops ripen early, and for the most part securely ; so that, in spite of its forbidding aspect, it might, under a well-regulated government, be a happy and contented, if not a rich and powerful country.

CHAPTER III.

Ancient History of Persia.

Early History wrapped in Fable—Sources entitled to Credit—Shah Nāmeh—Prose Histories—Assyrian Empire overthrown by the Medes—Early History according to the Dabistān—According to Mohammedan Authors—Pāls̄hdādian Dynasty—Conquest of Persia by Zohauk—Revolt of Kawah—Feridoon—Kayanian Dynasty—Kei Kobad—Perplexity of the Subject—Conquest of Persia by Cyrus—Uncertainty of his History—Darius I.—His Career—Probably the Gushtasp of the Persians—Darius Codomanus—His History according to Greek and Persian Writers—Anecdotes of Alexander the Great—Death of Darius—Parthian Dynasty—Obscurity of the Period—Character of their Empire—Overturned by Ardešir Babegan, first of the Sāsānians—History of that Dynasty—Defeat of Valerian by Shapoor—Baharam Gour—Nooshirwan—Khoosroo Purveez—Rise of Islamism—Irruption of the first Mohammedans—Overthrow of the Empire, and Death of Yezdijird.

THE earlier ages of Persian, as of all other history, are wrapped in fable and obscurity; but it has been judiciously observed, that if we would investigate the rise and progress of a nation, we must not altogether reject the mythology which conceals the traces of its origin. In drawing, however, from such sources, a distinction must be made between that which, having been early recorded, has been handed down pure, and those looser traditions which, being the growth of more recent times, must be viewed with greater suspicion.

Whatever we possess at all entitled to credit concerning the remoter periods of Persian history has been gathered from two sources. In the first place, from the pages of the Jewish Scriptures; and, secondly, from several pagan authors, particularly Herodotus, Diodorus, Ctesias, Strabo, Arrian, and others, who, living in an early age, collected and recorded the still more ancient notices which existed in their day. Little assistance is to be gleaned from native writers; for the absence of all genuine records before the era of Mohammedanism, casts a shade of doubt on all they have compiled regarding the early times of their country. The

natical zeal* of the Moslem invaders, and its destructive effects upon the literature of the vanquished, is well known. When cities were razed, temples burned, and the priests slaughtered round their altars, every book or other monument that could be discovered was also devoted to destruction. More than three centuries of darkness brooded over the Eastern World, before an effort was made to search out and arrange the few relics that might have escaped the general wreck. A prince of the house of Saman,^f who boasted his descent from Bahram Choubeen, one of the Sassanian monarchs, was the first to gather together the scattered fragments, which he deposited in the hands of Dukiki, with directions to arrange them into a poem that should contain the history of the kings from Kayomurz to Yezdijird. But Dukiki was assassinated by one of his own slaves, when he had written only a thousand couplets, and the task devolved, nearly a century afterward, on the celebrated Ferdusi. This great poet, the Homer of Persia, at the command of Mahmoud of Ghizni, followed up the conception of his predecessor, and produced the celebrated epic of the Shah Nameh, or History of Kings. This remarkable work, elaborated from such slender materials as its author could collect,—and slender indeed they must have been, since not a fragment has survived to give an idea of their nature,—amplified by his own vivid imagination, and adorned by his genins,—comprises almost all that Asiatic writers can produce on the subject of Persian and Tartarian history previous to the inroads of the new believers. The prose chronicles of a later date,—as the Rozat al Suffa, the Kholausut al Akbar, the Zeenut al Tuareekk, and others,—being compiled from documents not more authentic, by writers who lived in more recent times, can have no juster claim to consideration.

The first approach to an independent sovereignty in the countries of Modern Persia occurred in the year B. C. 747. It was then, according to the best chronologists, that Arbaces, governor of Media, conspired with Belesis,

* Gibbon doubts of the reputed fate of the celebrated library of Alexandria; but the general ill consequences to literature from Mohammedan fanaticism are indisputable. The fact related by Petit la Croix, in the history of Zingis Khan, of the Mogul troops littering their horses with the leaves of manuscripts from the libraries of Bokhara, sufficiently exemplifies the natural effects of a conquest by these barbarians.

^f Historians are not agreed whether this was Ismael Samani, or Aspas Noah, his great grandson.

governor of Babylon, and other nobles, against the effeminate Sardanapalus, with whom terminated the monarchy of the Assyrians.

Arbaces has by some been held to be the first sovereign of Media; but Herodotus attributes that distinction to Dejoces, the son of Phraortes, who, taking advantage of the disorders of the land, and aided by his own reputation, raised himself to the rank of a king. Before, however, proceeding farther with this portion of our history, it may be proper to advert to the fables and traditions of the Persians regarding the origin of their monarchy.

According to the Dabistan, time from all eternity has been divided into a succession of cycles. To each of these is allotted its peculiar class of beings, who terminate along with it, leaving only a single male and female to be the parents of a future race. The resemblance of this system to that of the yugs of the Hindoos is sufficiently obvious, and may no doubt be held as a good argument against its originality, and consequently against the antiquity of the work itself.

At the end of the great cycle which preceded the present one, a being named Mahabad was the individual spared to be the progenitor of a new world. He was the first lawgiver, monarch, and priest; he taught the primitive arts of life, and was succeeded by thirteen descendants, who, treading in his footsteps, diffused among mankind all the felicity of the golden age. The last of these patriarchal kings, however, Azerabad, having retired to a life of solitary devotion, the world fell into a state of universal anarchy, from which, after a great length of time, it was rescued by Jy Affram, a holy person, who was admonished by the angel Gabriel* to assume the reins of government, and restore peace and happiness. The new dynasty thus founded was brought to a termination by the disappearance of its last monarch Jy Abad, and followed by another period of misery and confusion. A similar alternation of good and evil was repeated for two more succeeding dynasties, when the predominance of wickedness became so great, that an offended deity converted the bad passions into the means of their own punishment. Murder

* The introduction of the angel Gabriel is of itself sufficient to defeat the claims of the Dabistan to high antiquity, and to fix upon it the stamp of forgery.

and violence accomplished his will,—the few human beings still remaining took refuge in woods and caverns, and left the earth desolate, until it was the Divine pleasure to call into being Kayomurz, or Gil Shah,* who, properly speaking, seems to have been the first of the present race of mankind, to deliver them from their fallen condition.

Such is an abridged account of the Mahabadean dynasty, as given by Sir John Malcolm on the authority of the Dabistan, the only historical work extant that professes to have collected the doctrines of the ancient Ghebres on this subject; and the duration assigned to each family of kings is so extravagant, as to prove beyond dispute that the work is entirely founded on fable.

According to all Mohammedan authors, Kayomurz was the first monarch of Persia, and they trace his descent to Noah (Zeenut al Tuareekk). He was the founder of that race of kings who have been termed Paishdadians, or Earliest Distributors of Justice. His actions have been magnified into miracles; his enemies are denominated deeves or magicians; his confederates were the lions and tigers of the forest; and after a succession of brilliant exploits he retired to Balkh, his capital, where he died, or resigned the crown to his son Hoshung, after a reign which had been restricted to the moderate term of thirty years. The second of the Paishdadians, a virtuous prince, was the inventor of many useful arts; among others, that of procuring fire from the collision of flint stones, and of irrigating land by means of aqueducts. He continued on the throne forty years, and was succeeded by his heir Tabmuras, who, from his successful struggles with the magicians, was surnamed Deevebund, and held the crown thirty years. Jumsheed, the fourth monarch of the dynasty, is one of the most celebrated of all the fabulous heroes of Persia. His power and riches are the theme of her historians and romance-writers, by whom he is extolled as the great reformer of his countrymen, and the author of many useful inventions,—and among others, the art of making wine. A long course of prosperity, however, created in this prince an inordinate arrogance, which was punished by the invasion of Zohauk, prince of Syria, who drove him from his dominions, and at length put him to a cruel death.

* This name signifies the earth king, or king of the earth, *gil* meaning clay.

This conqueror, a Syrian according to some, by others supposed to be an Arabian, the descendant of Shedad, and by others again, to be identical with the Nimrod of Holy Writ, is by all represented as a tyrant delighting in blood. The courage of Kawah, a blacksmith, delivered the nation from his sanguinary rule. To save his sons, who were doomed to be the victims of the monster's cruelty, he flew to arms, roused his countrymen, and using his apron as a banner, he overthrew and slew the usurper, and placed Feridoun, a descendant of Tahmuras, upon the throne of his ancestors. In these events the first glimmerings of truth break through the veil of fable that clouds the early history of Persia. The blacksmith's apron, which, adorned with jewels by the grateful prince, continued for ages, under the appellation of Durufsh e Kawanee, to be the royal standard, was taken during the first Mohammedan invasion, and sent to the Caliph Omar,—affording thus a powerful confirmation of the traditions of that period.*

The Persian historians dilate with enthusiasm on the justice, wisdom, and glory of Ferideon, whose virtues and prosperity acquired for him the emphatic appellation of E Furrookh,—The Fortunate. The evening of his long reign, which Ferdusi pretracts to the period of 500 years, was clouded by family quarrels, and the murder of his youngest son Erij by his brothers. This crime was severely punished by Manucheher, the heir of the slaughtered prince, who succeeded to the throne of his grandfather. The reign of this virtuous sovereign, who by some is conceived to be the Manducus of the Greeks, is remarkable as that in which Roostum, the celebrated national hero, makes his appearance. The miraculous birth and education of this wonderful personage, no less than the exploits of his long life, are the darling subject of the Shah Nameh. Nouzer, the son of Manucheher, by some regarded as the Sosarmes of Ctesias, a weak and contemptible prince, after enjoying supreme power seven years, was dethroned by Afrasiab, king of Tauran or Tartary, who held possession of Persia twelve years. This usurper was expelled by Zal, the father of Roostum and hereditary prince of Seistan, who placed Zoo or Zoah on the throne. The prince now named was succeeded by

* See Family Library, No. LXVIII. Arabia, Ancient and Modern.

Kershasp, his son, who has been regarded as the Artianes of Ctesias and Cardicias of Moses of Choren; but, being held incompetent, he was set aside by the all-powerful Zal, and with him terminated the Paishdadian dynasty, which, by the Persian computation, governed the country for 2450 years. "Of this race," observes Sir John Malcolm, "the names of only twelve kings remain, and of them we have hardly one fact, except the revolution of Kawah, that can be deemed historical!"

With the Kayanian dynasty, which, by both ancient and modern historians, has been recognised as that of the Medes, commences the first era which admits of comparison with the more authentic records of Western annalists. The Kei Kobad of Ferdusi in all probability represents the Dejoces of Herodotus and of Moses of Choren, and the Arses of Ctesias, who, in the year B. C. 710, when Persia was suffering under anarchy, was elected king by an assembly of nobles. The reign of this prince according to the Greek historian was fifty-three years, but according to Ferdusi 120. He built a magnificent palace, founded Ecbatana; and was the first who assumed an unusual degree of pomp, and of seclusion from his subjects.

Herodotus informs us that Dejoces was succeeded by his son Phraortes, who swayed the sceptre twenty-two years. There is no king in Persian history that corresponds with this prince; though Sir John Malcolm thinks the two succeeding reigns of Cyaxares I. and of Astyages are included in that of Kei Kaoos, who, according to Ferdusi, was the son and successor of Kei Kobad; but the perplexing fictions with which the genius of the poet has invested the events of this period has rendered his labours useless to the historian. The coincidence of the reigns of Kei Kaoos and Cyaxares rests upon a single fact,—a total eclipse of the sun, which took place during an engagement between the Medes, commanded by the latter sovereign, and the Lydians, in the year B. C. 601; and which is supposed to be the same phenomenon that, according to Ferdusi, struck the army of Kei Kaoos with sudden blindness in a battle with the Deees in Mazunderan. The occurrences may be identical; but it is at best a doubtful conjecture.

The conquest of Persia by Cyrus the Great forms one of the most important eras in the annals of that nation.

Much pains has been taken by Sir John Malcolm to reconcile the account of Cyrus, as given by Herodotus, with that of Kei Khoosroo, narrated by Ferdusi ; but when it is considered, that even in the days of the Greek annalist the personal history of that conqueror had already become uncertain, it is scarcely necessary to observe that all such speculations must be unsatisfactory.

The Persians, according to Heeren, were previously a highland people, and led a nomadic life. They were classed into ten tribes, of which the Pasargadæ was the ruling horde ; and the result of this division was a patriarchal government, the vestiges of which may be traced throughout their whole history.

The revolution effected by Cyrus was, therefore, like most other important revolutions of Asia, the effort of a great pastoral people, which, impelled by necessity and favoured by circumstances, forsook their own seats in search of more peaceful and permanent abodes, and drove out some previously successful invader, to experience in the end a similar fate, when luxury and degeneracy should have accomplished their work. Cyrus,* a descendant of Achæmenes, probably of the Pasargadæ, was elected leader of the Persian hordes, and by their assistance became a powerful conqueror, at a time when the Median and Babylonian kingdoms (B. C. 561 and 538) were on the decline. On their ruins he founded the Persian empire, which rapidly increased, until his dominions extended from the Mediterranean to the Indus and the Oxus. But in an expedition against the tribes of Central Asia he was unsuccessful, and according to some accounts fell in the field of battle.

There is no incident, however, as we have already observed, in which authors have differed more widely than on the fate of this monarch. Herodotus and Justin, as well as Diodorus Siculus, state that he was taken prisoner, and put to death by Tomyris, queen of the Massagetae. Ctesias says he was slain by the javelin of an Indian, while making war on the dervishes of that country ; but Xenophon informs us that he died in his bed, after delivering an edifying address to his two sons, and was buried at Pasargadæ in the year B. C.

* The same who is so frequently mentioned in Scripture. *Vide* Isaiah, Ezra, &c.

529. This is the account which is preferred both by Rollin and the authors of the Universal History, who cannot reconcile the fact of his tomb being actually seen at Pasargades two centuries afterward, by Alexander the Great, with his reputed death among the barbarians of Scythia.

Cambyses, the Ahasuerus of Scripture, the son of Cyrus, a cruel and intemperate monarch, succeeded his father. After reducing Egypt to the condition of a colony, and overrunning a great part of Northern Africa, he was accidentally killed by his own sword; which wounded him in the thigh as he mounted his horse.

Cambyses was followed by Pseudo Smerdis, who, personating the murdered brother of the deceased monarch, was, by a faction of the Magi, raised to the throne. But Otanes, a Persian nobleman of high rank, suspecting the deceit, detected it by means of his daughter Phedyma, who, having been the wife of the late king, was retained in the false monarch's harem. Taking to his councils six other chiefs, he put the impostor to death, after a reign of eight months, and slaughtered a multitude of the Wise Men. The conspirators then deliberated regarding the fittest form of government; and having decided that an absolute monarchy was the best, the whole seven agreed to meet on horseback at sunrise without the city, and that the crown should be given to him whose horse should neigh first.

The trick of Æbares, the groom of Darius Hyrcanus, which secured the supreme power to his master, is well known. On the preceding evening he brought his master's horse, together with a mare, to the appointed spot; the animal on the ensuing morning neighed as soon as he reached it, and that noble, who it appears drew his descent from Achaemenes, was immediately saluted king. His long and successful reign was marked by events which exercised a powerful influence over the destinies of Persia. Not less a legislator than a conqueror, he divided the empire into nineteen satrapies, on each of which was imposed a fixed tribute. This arrangement, which, according to Heeren, amounted solely to a partition of the various tributary races, subsequently assumed a geographical character, in which the ancient distribution of countries was for the most part observed. The duties of the satraps appear at first to have been confined to the collection of imposts, the improvement

of agriculture, and the performance of all the royal commands. They were purely civil governors, although, by an abuse of the institution, they afterward acquired military command. An efficient system of checks upon these officers was imposed ; periodical visits were paid to each district by royal commissioners, or by the king himself, accompanied by soldiers ; and an establishment of couriers was formed for transmitting edicts to every quarter of the empire.

Nor was the organization of his army less an object of the monarch's attention. It was distributed into commands, formed on the principle of decimal division,—a system which has ever since prevailed. The troops were cantoned in the open field, in districts throughout the empire, or stationed as garrisons in cities, distinct from the encampment, where they were maintained at the cost of the provinces,—a special portion of the taxes being allotted for the purpose. In process of time Greek mercenaries were taken into pay ; the grandees and satraps entertained a military household ; and on occasion of great wars recourse was had to a general conscription.

The arms of Darius's predecessors had been directed against the regions of Asia and Africa alone. This monarch crossed the Thracian Bosphorus and invaded Europe with an army of 70,000* men. But his attempt to subdue the Scythian tribes between the Danube and the Don being unsuccessful, in his retreat he overran Thrace and Macedonia ; thus establishing the Persian power in Greece,—a measure fraught with most disastrous consequences to his successors. His efforts in the East were more fortunate ; and the year B. C. 569 was signalized by the commencement of that extraordinary voyage undertaken at his command by Scylax, a mariner of Caria. A fleet was equipped at Caspatyra, a city on the Indus, and the enterprising Greek launched his vessels on that river, with directions to proceed westward until he should come to Persia. He crossed the Gulf, and coasted the barren land of Arabia to the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, which he entered, and after thirty months' navigation reached Egypt. The information he communicated induced Darius to invade India with a large army, and several

* Rollin remarks, that in several copies of Herodotus this army is stated as consisting of 700,000 men, and Justin says the same ; but there can be little doubt that 70,000 is the true reading.

of its rich provinces soon became the twentieth satrapy of his empire. These successes were clouded, it is true, by reverses in the West ; and the revolt of Egypt, the burning of Sardis, and the defeat of Marathon (September 29, B. C. 490), darkened the glory and counterbalanced the advantages of his victories in the East. He resolved to repair these disasters in person ; but death* arrested his progress, and he bequeathed to his son Xerxes the task of punishing Athens for having asserted her freedom.

Although there exist the best grounds for identifying the Gushtasp of Persian historians with Darius Hystaspes, and though it seem equally well established that in his reign the celebrated Zerdusht, or Zoroaster rose into fame, no notice whatever is taken of that philosopher by any of the Greek writers. The king was the first convert of this sage, who had devoted his life and talents to purify the religion of his ancestors ; and so zealous did the monarch become in the propagation of this reformed faith, that he built fire-temples in every quarter, and compelled his subjects to worship at them. This change of religion became the cause of a bloody war between the empires of Iran and Tooran, in which Isfudnear, the son of Gushtasp, another celebrated hero of Persian romance, performed a series of exploits not inferior to those of Roostum, by whom, however, the young warrior was at length slain in an expedition against that aged chief in his hereditary dominions.

The reign of Xerxes I., disgraceful towards its close, presented during its earlier period events as important to his country as remarkable in themselves. A gleam of success illuminated his first efforts, and the revolt of Egypt was punished by its being subjected to the sanguinary vengeance of his brother Achæmenes. But the mighty armament, in the preparation of which he is said to have spent three years, was checked by a handful of devoted patriots at Thermopylæ, and destroyed at Salamis, Platæa, and Mycale ; and the ostentatious review of his 3,000,000 of troops† and 3000

* His epitaph, which records his remarkable power of drinking much wine and bearing it well, presents a singular trait of national manners ; and it is curious to mark the change, in this respect, of more modern times. Whatever be the vices of Mohammedanism, that of intemperance cannot be numbered among them.

† Or, with camp-followers, women, and all his allies or tributaries, 5,363,220 men. This, observe the authors of the Universal History, is

ships, was strikingly contrasted with his secure contemplation of his defeat by the Greeks, and his cowardly flight from the scene of disgrace in a single fishing-boat.

Of his remaining years little knowledge has reached our times, if we except the bloody intrigues of the seraglio, to which he fell a victim in the twelfth,* or, as some say, the twenty-first of his power. It is singular that no trace of this monarch appears in Persian history; nor can the omission be explained on the grounds of national vanity, for similar neglects are to be found where the facts would have altogether redounded to their own honour. Sir John Malcolm supposes that the prolonged period attributed to the reign of Gushtasp,—sixty years,—may comprehend those of Darius and his son Xerxes, who in that case would be identified with Isfundear.

That Bahman, the son of Isfundear, who, on his accession to the throne of his grandfather, assumed the name of Ardeshir *Dirazdusht*, or the Longhanded, is the Artaxerxes Longimanus† of the Greeks, who succeeded his father Xerxes upon the assassination of that prince by Artabanes, appears to be sufficiently ascertained. He inherited a sceptre already weakened, and a throne which, even in the time of his predecessor, glorious as it was, had received a material shock. During forty years, however, he not only maintained the integrity of his dominions, but extended them, as some say, from India to Ethiopia; but a recurrence of rebellions and other symptoms of decay exhibited themselves, which were developed more fully in the ephemeral reign of his son Xerxes II., of Sogdianus, and of Ochus, who ascended the throne under the title of Darius II.

In no period is the Persian chronology more imperfect than in what refers to Ardeshir Dirazdusht. Omitting all mention of the five succeeding monarchs recorded by Greek historians, there is attributed to the reign of that monarch a duration of 112 years,—to a certain queen, Homai his daughter,

the computation of Herodotus, with whom agree Plutarch and Isocrates. Others reduce the aggregate greatly; but, both in the Universal History and by Rollin, the enumeration is considered too well authenticated to be called in question.

* Rollin places his death in the year 473; the Universal History in 464 B. C.

† By some supposed to be the Ahasuerus of Scripture, the husband of Esther, although the chronology does not appear to agree. *Vide Universal History*, vol. xxi. p. 85.

who is by some regarded as the founder of the celebrated hall of Chehel Minar at Persepolis, a government of thirty-two years,—and to her son, who is termed by them Darab I., an administration of twelve years.

The Zeenut al Tuareekk, a Persian work of respectability, places the conquest of Babylon and the deposition of the son of Bucht al Nussur in this period. But if this governor was the Belshazzar of Scripture, as Sir John Malcolm supposes, such a fact would be fatal to the identity of Ardeeshir Dirazducht with Artaxerxes Longimanus; as the conquest of Babylon, according to the generally-received chronology, occurred in the year B. C. 538, whereas Artaxerxes did not ascend the throne until 464 B. C. On the same grounds he cannot be the prince who married Esther; for that event, according to biblical reckoning, took place in the year 510 B. C. It may therefore with greater probability be applied to Darius I., who is supposed by the authors of the Universal History to be the Ahasuerus of Scripture, the same who renewed and enforced the decree of Cyrus in favour of the Jews; and who took Babylon, which had revolted, after a siege of two years.

The reign of Artaxerxes Mnemou, eldest son of Darius II., or Nothus, was principally remarkable on account of the struggles for the crown in which he was engaged with his younger brother Cyrus, and the celebrated expedition and retreat of the 10,000 Greek mercenaries under Xenophon, who came to aid that prince. And although a temporary success did gild the arms of his son Ochus, who mounted the throne under the title of Artaxerxes III., yet the sceptre was indirectly swayed by favourites; and his reign of twenty years bore manifest symptoms of that decay and of those intrigues which overthrew the empire under his successor.

Darius Codomanus, the second Darab of Persian historians, who was but a relative of the royal family, assumed the sceptre at a critical period (B. C. 336). Raised to the imperial dignity by Bagoas, an Egyptian eunuch of infamous character, but considerable talents, he perceived that a similar bondage, or even death itself, was only to be avoided by decided measures; and he was fortunate enough to anticipate the designs of his minister, by forcing him to drink the very cup of poison which that wretch had prepared for his sovereign.

The new monarch was speedily summoned to defend the throne he had so hazardously won; for Philip of Macedon having been murdered by Pausanias, captain of the guard, his son, the celebrated Alexander, was proclaimed general of the Greeks. In the same year (B. C. 334) the Hellespont was passed by that prince with an army of 35,000 men; and the battle of the Granicus gave significant omen of the issue of the war.

A rapid career of success in Asia Minor led to the celebrated and fatal field of Issus, where the slaughter of 100,000 Persians, and the capture of the imperial family, the king alone excepted, at once atoned for the insignificant loss of 300 Macedonians, and convinced the unfortunate Darius of the formidable character of his enemies. But it was at the still more decisive conflict of Gaugamela, commonly termed the battle of Arbela,* that the hapless monarch, seeing his best troops mowed down or dispersed, fled from the ground and took refuge in Ecbatana.

Still possessed, however, of considerable resources besides his faithful band of 4000 Greek mercenaries, he might still have maintained a struggle for the crown. But his nobles, seduced by the traitor Bessus, joined in a conspiracy to seize his person, and having insulted his fallen state by binding him with golden chains, they fled towards Bactriana, carrying their victim in a car covered with skins. Pursued by Alexander with almost incredible speed, the assassins, fearful of being overtaken, stabbed their victim and left him in the chariot weltering in his blood. Polystrates, a Macedonian, found him in the agonies of death; he asked for water, and with his last breath implored blessings on the head of Alexander for his kindness to his wife, his mother, and his children. "Present," said he to Polystrates, "your hand to Alexander, as I do mine to you,—the only pledge I have in this condition to give of my gratitude and affection." With these words he expired; and with him terminated the dynasty founded by Cyrus, which, under thirteen consecutive kings, subsisted 206 years.

The history of Darab appears to be chiefly derived from Greek materials, although doubtless much garbled. According to the Persian authorities, who delight in exalting their

* B. C. 331. The village or town is still called Arbile

idol the son of Philip, his opponent Darab II. was a tyrant as deformed in body as vicious in mind,—a prince whose evil administration and private profligacy rendered it a blessing for their country to be conquered by a hero like Alexander, whom, with characteristic vanity, they endeavour to prove to be a son of their first Darius. For this purpose they pretend that Darab I., having in a war with Philip of Macedon reduced that monarch to sue for peace, consented to an amicable treaty, upon condition of receiving an annual tribute of 1000 eggs of pure gold, together with his daughter in marriage. Of this union they declare Alexander to be the fruit ; but the fable is rejected by the more respectable of their own authors.

The Zeenut al Tuareekk nevertheless states, that the quarrel which proved fatal to the Kayanian dynasty did originate in the refusal of Alexander, after his father's death, to pay the tribute of golden eggs. "The bird which laid these eggs has flown to the other world," was his laconic reply to the envoys who came to demand them. The Persian monarch then despatched to Macedon an ambassador, whom he charged to deliver to the Grecian king a bat and ball, along with a bag of gunjud, which is a very small seed. The two first were intended to throw ridicule on his youth, as affording fit amusement for his years. The bag of seed represented the innumerable multitudes of the Persian army. The young monarch, taking in his hand the bat, replied, "I accept your presents ; behold the emblem of my power ! with this shall I strike the ball of your master's dominion ;" and, ordering a fowl to be brought, which instantly began to devour the grain, "This bird," continued he, "will show you what a morsel your numerous army will prove to mine." In conclusion, he gave the envoy a wild melon, desiring him to present it to his master, and to bid him judge by its taste of the bitter lot that awaited him in the approaching conflict.

Few details* of the memorable war which ensued are

* Sir John Malcolm observes, that Persian historians have referred the death of Darius to the first general action ; but the author of the Lubtareekh (we quote from the Universal History) describes the progress of Alexander towards Azerbijan, where he defeated one of Darius's captains ; that he then subdued Ghilan, and from thence advanced into Persia, where he defeated Darius, who fled, leaving his wives and family in the hands of the victor ; that the Persian monarch was again defeated in a second pitched battle, and afterward treacherously murdered by his own officers.

recorded by the native writers ; but they give a particular account of the action in which Darius lost his life, and of the circumstances of his death. According to them, in the heat of battle, two Persian soldiers, taking advantage of an unguarded moment, slew their master and fled to Alexander. The Grecian king hastened to the spot, and found the unfortunate Darab in the agonies of death, stretched on the ground and covered with dust and blood. The conqueror alighted from his horse, and placed the dying monarch's head on his own knees ; his soul was melted at the sight ; he shed tears, and kissed the cheek of his expiring enemy, who, opening his eyes, exclaimed, "The world hath a thousand doors; through which its tenants continually enter and pass away."—"I swear to you," said Alexander, "I never wished a day like this—I desired not to see your royal head in the dust, nor that blood should stain these cheeks!" When the wounded ruler heard these words, he sighed deeply, and said he trusted his murderers would not escape ; that Alexander would not place a stranger on the throne of Persia ; and that he would not injure the honour of his family, but marry his daughter Roushunuc (Roxana). The moment after, he expired. His body was embalmed with musk and amber, wrapped in a cloth of gold, and placed in a coffin adorned with jewels. In this state it was carried to the sepulchral vault with extraordinary honours ; Alexander himself, and the chief nobles of Persia, attending as mourners. The moment the funeral was over the assassins were hanged, and some time after, Alexander married Roushunuc, and nominated the brother of the late king to the sovereignty of the conquered country. Thus, however, did the dynasty of the Kayanians pass away,* and

* Those readers who may be curious to compare the Persian account of the Kayanian dynasty with the monarchs recorded by the Greek historians supposed to correspond with them, may be interested in the following table—it proves little more than the hopeless character of the inquiry.

PERSIAN AUTHORITIES.		GREEK AUTHORITIES.	
Name.	Reign.	Name.	Reign.
1. Koi Kobad, founder of the Kayanians, reigned	120	1. Dejoces,	53
No corresponding prince in Persian history.		2. Phraortes,	22
2. Koi Kaoos,.....	150	3. Cyaxares,	40
No corresponding prince.		4. Astyages,	35
3. Koi Khooaroo,.....	60	5. Cyrus,	30

such is the meager account of these great transactions given by Persian historians,—an account which appears to have been borrowed in part from the Greek writers, and mixed up with a still greater proportion of fable. It might be imagined, indeed, that they sought to compensate for the deficiency of historical fact by indulging more abundantly in romance; and whole volumes might be extracted from their pages, of fanciful and extravagant adventure, as well as of anecdotes and sayings of their favourite prince.

For many years after the death of Alexander (B. C. 323) Asia continued to be a theatre of wars waged by his ambitious successors. But about 307 before our era, Seleucus had established himself securely in possession of all the countries between the Euphrates, the Indus, and the Oxus. Soon afterward he penetrated even to the Ganges; and the alliance which he entered into with the Indian sovereign Sandracottus was maintained for many years by reciprocal embassies.

The sway of the Seleucidæ continued undisturbed until the year 250 B. C., when the Parthians made their first attempt to snatch the sceptre from them. Arsaces, a noble of that country, indignant at a brutal affront which Agathocles,* governor of the province, had offered to his youthful brother Tiridates, mustered a few friends and slew the tyrant. Finding his party increase unexpectedly, he conceived the idea of expelling the Macedonians,—an enterprise which he accom-

PERSIAN AUTHORITIES.		GREEK AUTHORITIES.	
Names.	Reigns.	Names.	Reigns.
4. Lohrasp,.....	120	6. Cambyses,.....	7 5
5. Gushtasp,.....	60	7. Smerdis the Magian,..	— 7
6. Ardashir Dirazdusht,....	113	8. Darius Hystaspes,	36
7. Queen Homai,.....	32	9. Xerxes,.....	21
8. Darab I,.....	14	10. Artaxerxes Longimanus,.....	49
No corresponding prince.		No corresponding prince.	
No corresponding princess.		11. Darius Nothus,.....	19
9. Darab II.		12. Artaxerxes Mnemon, ..	46
		13. Ochus,	21
		14. Arses,	2
		15. Darius Codomanus,...	5

* Arrian calls him Pherecles.

plished ; and, taking advantage of his own popularity, he assumed the royal ensigns, and even reduced the neighbouring province of Hyrcania, where Seleucus Callimachus commanded. In the moment of victory over that prince, however,—a victory which his countrymen regarded as the true era of their liberty,—he was mortally wounded, and died,* bequeathing his crown to his brother Tiridates, and his name to the Parthian dynasty. Our limits will not permit us to linger in detail over the exploits of this long and splendid race of kings, nor even to enumerate their several reigns ; we shall only advert to a few remarkable events which ought not to be passed over in silence.

The Parthian empire is by most historians held to have attained its highest grandeur in the reign of its sixth monarch, Mithridates I., who carried his arms even farther than Alexander himself. He extended his sway from the Euphrates to the Indus ; he reduced Syria, making captive its king, Demetrius Nicator ; and princes of his blood ruled in Scythia, in India, and Armenia.† But although the national prosperity was at its height under this sovereign, their arms undoubtedly received an accession of lustre in their subsequent contests with the mistress of the Western World.

The earliest correspondence between the Roman and Parthian empires occurred in the reign of Pacorus, the ninth of the Arsacidae, who in the year B. C. 90 despatched an embassy to Sylla, at that time prætor and commanding an army in Cappadocia. Thirty-seven years afterward, and in the reign of Orodes, the eleventh of the race, an army under the Consul Licinius Crassus experienced, on the plains of Mesopotamia, and from a Parthian general, one of the most signal defeats which their legions had ever sustained. This celebrated action so greatly increased the power and excited the presumption of the victors, that, not content with extending their conquests to remote provinces, they began to mingle in the more domestic affairs of the West, and to take an interest in the struggles between Cæsar and Pompey. Intoxicated with success, they overran the whole of Syria and Asia Minor, until they were checked and driven back with loss by Antony's general, Ventidius. But Antony himself, during

* Justin says he fell in a battle with Ariarathes, King of Cappadocia.

† *Vide M. J. Saint Martin on the Origin of the Arsacidae.—Journal Asiatique*, vol. i. p. 65.

the succeeding reign, in a vain attempt to revenge the disgrace of Crassus, very narrowly escaped a similar fate. Betrayed on nearly the same ground, he owed his safety, after a long and painful retreat, to the river Aras, across which the enemy did not pursue him. Nevertheless, Phraates, the fifteenth of the Arsacidae, was content to avert the threatened vengeance of Augustus, by restoring the standards that had been taken from Crassus (B. C. 36).

A series of disputes, reconciliations, and treaties marked the intercourse between the empires of Rome and Parthia for the next 200 years; at which period a treacherous act of the unprincipled Caracalla involved his successor Macrinus in a bloody war with Artabanus, the thirtieth and last of his family; and although hostilities as usual terminated in a renewed alliance, the loss sustained by the Eastern king was so considerable that he was unable to suppress the rebellion of Ardashir or Artaxerxes, a Persian chief of great courage and experience. This leader, profiting by the emperor's weakness and the hereditary animosity of his countrymen to the Parthians, prevailed on many to join him. The descendant of Arsaces was defeated in three battles,* taken prisoner, and put to death, A. D. 226, and with him terminated this renowned dynasty, after having filled the throne of Darius 480 years.

The time occupied by this royal house is one of the most obscure in Persian history. "From the death of Alexander," remarks Sir John Malcolm, "till the reign of Ardashir Babegan, is a space of nearly five centuries, and the whole of that remarkable era may be termed a blank in Eastern history. And yet, when we refer to the pages of Roman writers, we find this interval abounding with events of which the vainest nation might be proud; and that Parthian monarchs, whose names cannot now be discovered in the history of their own country, were the only sovereigns upon whom the Roman arms in the zenith of their glory could make no permanent impression."

Meerkhond, one of the most respectable of the native analists, ascribes the origin of the Arsacidae to Ashk or Ashg, a descendant of their ancient kings, and a petty chief, who

* Some say one battle, which lasted three days.

obtained the aid of his countrymen by declaring that he possessed the Persian standard—the Durush e Kawanee—which his uncle had saved when Darab was defeated and slain. After putting to death the viceroy Abtahesh (Agathocles), he invited the chiefs of provinces to join him against the Seleucidæ, promising to exact no tribute, but to consider himself merely as the leader of the princes united to deliver the country from a foreign yoke. From this coalition the dynasty of the Arsacidæ (or Ashkanians) obtained the appellation of Mulook e Tuaf, or Commonwealth of Tribes; and some authors think, that notwithstanding the proud height to which some of them attained, the Parthian rulers were only the heads of a confederacy of chiefs, each of whom aspired to regal and independent power.

The Baron Saint Martin, in his Memoir on the Origin of the Arsacidæ, remarks the striking similarity between the structure of their government and the feudal systems of Europe, and deduces both from one common origin, the laws of conquest. "The Parthians," he says, "a nation of mounted warriors, sheathed in complete steel, and possessed of a race of horses equally remarkable for speed and endurance, overran their feeble Persian neighbours almost without opposition, and erected themselves into a true military aristocracy, while the conquered were degraded into a mere herd of slaves. The invaders thus became the feudal lords of the vanquished nation, or rather the nation itself; for the rest, attached to the soil, remained serfs in all the force of the term. Thus every arrangement of the feudal system may be found in the scheme of the Arsacidan government; the same usages and institutions, even the same dignities and officers. A constable is discovered commanding their armies; marquises defending the frontiers; barons and feudal lords of all descriptions; knights and men-at-arms: the same limited number of the noble and free; the same multitude of vassals and slaves. The Parthian cavaliers, sheathed man and horse in armour, may well represent the knights of the West: like them we find them forming the strength of the army; like them bearing every thing down before them, while the infantry was contemned and disregarded."

The empire of the Arsacidæ, according to this learned

Frenchman, was in fact a feudal monarchy composed of four principal kingdoms, all ruled by members of the same family, who regarded as supreme the elder branch, which was seated on the Persian throne. It formed the centre of a vast political system, maintaining relations with the Romans in the West, and with the Chinese in the East, the imperial head of which received the imposing title of King of kings,* which indeed was no empty boast, for he exercised a sovereign sway over all the princes of his blood. The monarch of Armenia held the next rank; the Prince of Bactria, who possessed the countries between Persia and India, even to the banks of the Indus, was third in importance; and last of all stood the ruler of the Massagetae, whose dominions were the steppes of Southern Russia, and who governed the nomade tribes encamped between the Don and Volga. The whole race sprang from the Daces, natives of Daghestan, a territory eastward of the Caspian Sea.

The fall of the imperial branch did not immediately involve that of the others. The kings of Bactria, of Scythia, and Armenia requested aid from the Romans against the usurper; but their strength, already on the decline, was unequal to cope with the rising power of Persia, and in the beginning of the fifth century the two former submitted to the dominion of the Hiatilla or White Huns of Sogdiana. The Armenian monarchs maintained themselves somewhat longer; they embraced the gospel thirty years before Constantine, and were thus the first Christian kings. Their reign terminated A. D. 428; but the family continued to exist in Persia, where a branch of them once more attained to sovereign power under the title of the Samanides.

Such is an outline of the learned Saint Martin's observations upon the Parthian dynasty; and we shall dismiss them with the following table, which exhibits the order of their succession. A comparison with that of the Ashkanians, as given by Sir John Malcolm, may serve to show how little dependence can be placed on the Persian accounts.

* This title, and that of Great King, was not peculiar to the Arsacides: it was for similar reasons assumed by the sovereigns of the Medes, Persians, and Assyrians.

Arsacidae, according to the Western historians, taken from the Universal History :—

1. Arsaces I.	16. Vonones I.
2. Tiridates, his brother.	17. Artabanes II.
3. Arsaces II.	18. Tiridates.
4. Preparatus.	19. Bardanes.
5. Phraates I.	20. Gotarzes.
6. Mithridates I.	21. Miherdates.
7. Phraates II.	22. Vonones II.
8. Artabanes I.	23. Volgeses I.
9. Pacorus I., who sent ambassadors to Syria.	24. Artabanes III.
10. Phraates III.	25. Pacorus II.
11. Orodes I.	26. Chosroes.
12. Mithridates II.	27. Parthanasaspes.
13. Phraates IV.	28. Volgeses II.
14. Phraatices.	29. Volgeses III.
15. Orodes II.	30. Artabanes IV.

Princes of the Ashkanians, according to the Zeenut al Tuareekk :

	Year.
1. Arduan, son of Ashk, reigned	28
2. Khoosroo, son of Arduan,.....	19
3. Pellas, son of Ashr,	12
4. Gudurz (supposed Gotarzes),	30
5. Narsi, son of Gudurz,.....	30
6. Narsi, son of Narsi,.....	18
7. Arduan, slain by Ardashir Babegan : years of his reign not mentioned.	<hr/> 132

From the above lists it appears, that out of a dynasty which subsisted 480 years, the Persians are acquainted with only seven sovereigns, who reigned (allowing for the reign of Arduan) about 150 years. The name of Mithridates is not mentioned, nor of Orodes, nor of his general Surenas, who defeated Crassus.

The rise of the Sassanian monarchs forms a new and important epoch in Persian history. Even the native annalists at this period become less vague, and their accounts are more easily reconciled with the records of Western writers. But the limits of our historical sketch will not permit us to describe at length the various reigns of this dynasty ; we must therefore content ourselves with presenting a list of the kings, and noticing the most remarkable events which distinguished their several lives.

LIST OF SASSANIAN KINGS,

Taken from the Universal History.

GREEK ACCOUNT.

YR.

M.

	YR.	M.		YR.	M.
1. Artaxerxes,	14	10	1. Ardeshir Babegan,	14	—
2. Sapores,	31	—	2. Shapoor,	31	—
3. Ormizdates,	1	—	3. Hoormuz,	31	—
4. Varanes,	3	—	4. Baharam,	3	3
5. Varanes II,	17	—	5. Baharam,	70	—
6. Varanes III,	—	4	6. Baharam,	30	4
7. Narses,	7	9	7. Narsi,	9	—
8. Misdates.			8. Hoormuz,	7	5
9. Sapores II,	70	—	9. Shapoor Zoolactaf,	72	—
10. Artaxerxes,	4	—	10. Ardeshir,	4	—
11. Sapores III,	5	—	11. Shapoor,	5	—
12. Varanes IV., { Cermansas,	11	—	12. Baharam Ker-	13	—
13. Isdigertes,	21	—	manshah,		
14. Varanes V.,	20	—	13. Yezdijird,	21	—
15. Varanes VI.,	17	4	14. Baharam Gour,	23	—
16. Peroses,	20	—	15. Yezdijird,	18	—
17. Valens,	4	—	16. Hoormuz,	1	—
18. Cavades,	11	—	17. Ferose,	28	—
19. Zambades,	8	—	18. Balash,	14	—
20. Cavades,	30	—	19. Kobad,	43	—
21. Chosroes,	48	—	20. Nooshirwan,	48	—
22. Hormisdes,	8	—	21. Hoormuz,	12	—
23. Chosroes II.,	39	—	22. Khooeroo Purveez,	32	—
24. Siroes,	1	—	23. Sheroueh,	—	6
25. Ardeshir,	—	2	24. Ardeshir,	1	6
26. Barbaras,	—	6	25. Sheheryar,	2	1
27. Bornarim,	—	7	26. Tourandocht,	—	2
28. Hormisdes, or Isdi-	{ 10	—	27. Arzemidocht,	1	4
gertes,			28. Furrukzade,	—	1
			29. Yezdijird,	20	—

Ardeshir Babegan was the son of Babec, an officer of inferior rank, and a descendant of Sassan, grandson of Isfundear. The latter part of this genealogical tree is probably an after-growth, when success had suggested the expediency of a regal lineage; but there appears no good reason for crediting the Greek historians who assign to him a spurious birth. A rapid rise in the public service intoxicated his ardent mind; and dreams, the offspring of ambitious hopes, confirmed his aspiring designs. Driven from court, he was received with acclamation by the nobility of Fars. His resolution to aim at sovereign power was encouraged by the feebleness of the imperial armies; and, supported by his countrymen, he marched almost unopposed

to Ispahan, and overran the greater part of Irak before Artabanes could take the field. Three battles, as we have already said, terminated the hopes and life of the reigning prince; and Ardeshir was hailed on the field as Shah in shah, or King of kings. In the course of a reign which extended to fourteen years, he greatly enlarged his dominions, and opposed with various success the arms of the Roman Emperor Alexander. Nor was he less eminent as a legislator. The well-consolidated empire which, formed out of the scattered fragments of the Parthian monarchy, he transmitted to his son, affords the strongest testimony of his abilities.

Perhaps the most characteristic feature in his government was his zeal to restore the ancient religion, neglected or degraded by the Parthian monarchs,—a zeal doubtless as much the offspring of policy as of piety; and the great assembly* of mobuds and priests which he summoned from all quarters to superintend the reform, is still contemplated as a most important era in the history of Zoroaster. The testamentary advice which he addressed to his son, as recorded by Ferdusi, exhibits his views of religion, and of the duties of a sovereign, in a very favourable point of view.

Shapoor, the first Sapore of the Western historians, received the sceptre from his father under the happiest auspices (A. D. 242), and imboldened by success carried his arms into the Roman provinces of Asia. The young Emperor Gordian had made preparations to punish the insult, when his purpose was arrested by assassination; and Valerian, in attempting to relieve Edessa, then besieged by the son of Ardeshir, was taken prisoner. The Persian monarch's treatment of his captive has been variously reported; but when we are told that he daily poured indignities upon him, using his neck as a footstool to mount his horse, and after a long confinement caused him to be flayed alive, we must remember that the tale is derived from those who felt the national glory tarnished by his victories. Condemned by the European

* They amounted to 40,000. Of this unmanageable multitude, 400 were chosen—from them forty; and out of these seven were invested with supreme authority. But the task of declaring the truth was in the end intrusted to one young saint named Erdavirasp, who, being thrown into a trance by means of a certain odorous wine, enumerated, on his awaking seven days and nights afterward, what became the orthodox tenets of religion ever after.

annalists as an insolent and cruel tyrant, he is celebrated by those of the East as a model of wisdom, moderation, and justice. Odenathus, prince of Palmyra, and after him the Emperor Aurelian, avenged at length the Roman honour; but Shapoor, after building various cities, and conquering many provinces, bequeathed his dominions in peace to his son Hormisdas or Hoormuz, A. D. 273.

The reign of Baharam I., the Varanes of Greek writers, is remarkable for the execution of Mani, founder of the sect of the Manichæans, who attempted to amalgamate the doctrines of Zoroaster, the metempsychosis of the Hindoos, and the tenets of Christianity, into one religious code. Driven from Persia in the reign of Shapoor, he ventured back in that of Baharam, who, under pretext of hearkening to his instructions, seized the impostor, and, putting him to death, sent his skin stuffed with straw to be hung up at the gate of the city.

The next event of consequence is the defeat of the Emperor Galerius by Narsi, the seventh monarch of the house of Sassan, on the same field which had been fatal to Crassus, and after he had twice routed the Persian monarch near Antioch. But the Roman prince redeemed his reputation in a second campaign, when the family and equipage of his opponent, which were taken in the flight, attested the greatness of his victory.

Shapoor Zoolactaf, the second Sapore of Greek authors, —so called from the cruel punishment he inflicted on certain predatory bands,—was a prince of high talents. During a reign of seventy years he maintained the empire in prosperity; and although his career was checked by the genius or the fame of Constantine, yet the troops of Constantius often retreated before the Persian banners. Even the fruits of the hard-fought field of Zingara (A. D. 350) were wrested from the improvident legions of Rome by the watchful prudence and rapid decision of Shapoor, who recovered his advantage in a nocturnal attack. The celebrated Julian fled* before the enemy's archers when led by this prince (A. D. 363); and his successor Jovian was content to accede to a peace, purchased with the loss of all the provinces east of

* He was accidentally killed by an arrow in repulsing an attack of the Persians, having foolishly allowed himself to be persuaded to burn his fleet and to advance into the country of the enemy.

the Tigris, which had been ceded by the predecessor of Zoolactaff.

The virtues and talents of Baharam Gour (Varanes V.), his gallantry, his munificence, and his mild yet firm government, are favourite themes with the native historians. The patriarchal simplicity of his sway resembled that of an Arab chief rather than the rule of an absolute monarch. Fond to excess of the sports of the field, he was one day in full career after a gour-khur, or wild-ass, the animal which it was his passion to pursue, and from which he derived his name. The scene of the chase was the plain of Oujan, from time immemorial a royal hunting-ground, and termed by the Persians the Valley of Heroes ; it abounds with deep morasses into one of which the king plunged on horseback and lost his life.

Khoosroo Nooshirwan, a prince whose name is repeated with enthusiasm and reverence by all historians, and which is still in the mouth of every Persian as the synonyme of wisdom, justice, and munificence, came to the throne A. D. 531. So eminent a personage could scarcely be permitted to have a common origin. His birth is attributed to an amour of Kobad, the nineteenth prince of this dynasty, with a beautiful female at Nishapour, when, flying from his brother Feroose, he halted for a night in that city. Four years afterward, as he returned by the same route at the head of an army, his fair mistress presented him with a beautiful boy, the fruit of their intimacy. While gazing at him with delight, tidings arrived that Feroose was dead, and that the throne of Persia waited his acceptance. This felicitous coincidence decided the child's fate : viewing it as a mark of the favour of Providence, he treated the young Nooshirwan from that day with distinction, and subsequently made him his heir.

This prince found the empire groaning under a variety of abuses. Of these, not the least grievous was the prevalence of a sect which had sprung up in the reign of his father, and inculcated a community of females and of property, a doctrine which gained abundance of proselytes among the dissolute and the needy. Mazdac, the founder of this new faith, had made so complete a convert of the weak Kobad, that, but for the indignant remonstrances of his favourite

son, he would have relinquished his queen to the impostor as a pledge of his sincerity. The profligate courtiers, like their monarch, embraced this liberal code of morality ; and the votaries of Mazdac seized the wives, daughters, and goods of others at their pleasure. As complaints were vain, a series of disturbances was the consequence ; but no change was effected until the accession of Nooshirwan. Even he temporized at first ; but no sooner was he secure of power than he seized the new prophet, and terminated the baneful delusion by destroying him and a multitude of his followers at the same moment.

Nooshirwan built or repaired a number of caravansaries, bazaars, bridges, and other public edifices ; founded colleges and schools, encouraged learning, and introduced at his court the philosophers of Greece. In his administration he was aided by his minister Abuzoorgamihr, frequently called Buzoorcheemihir,—a person remarkable throughout the East as a statesman and sage, and who had raised himself from the humblest condition. Under his superintendence the empire was divided into four governments, with regulations for checking every abuse on the part of the officers in trust ; while all were controlled by the vigilance of the sovereign.

In his intercourse with the Romans he maintained a tone of singular superiority. Of this the ignominious peace purchased by the Emperor Justinian, the tribute of 30,000 pieces of gold, and the general spirit of his negotiations with the court of Constantinople, afford sufficient proof. The reduction of all Syria, the capture of Antioch, and the extension of the Persian territories from the banks of the Phasis to the shores of the Mediterranean, from the Red Sea to the Jaxartes and to the Indus, bear equal evidence to the vigour of his military genius. But his career in the West was checked by the talents of Belisarius ; and had the Roman general been able to follow up his successes the struggle might have terminated less favourably to Nooshirwan. Undaunted by occasional reverses, and unbroken by natural infirmity, the veteran warrior, at the age of eighty years, led his armies against the legions of Justin and Tiberias, and reaped, as the reward of his valour and perseverance, the conquest of Dara and the plunder of Syria.

The glory of the Sassanides had attained its height, if it

did not terminate with Nooshirwan, who died A. D. 579. Hoormuz III., his son, a weak and wicked prince, in his short and disastrous reign excited a general disaffection, which was only repressed by the talents of Baharam Choubeen. A wanton affront instigated that general to put to death his unworthy sovereign, and to aspire to the supreme authority ; but he was unable to resist the power of the Roman Emperor Maurice, who raised to the throne Khoosroo Purveez, son of the murdered monarch, acting the part of a real father to the son of his adoption.*

The engagements contracted by the humble fugitive were scrupulously fulfilled by the prosperous monarch ; but no sooner had the assassination of Maurice reached the ears of Khoosroo, and the restraint of gratitude been removed, than, on pretence of avenging his benefactor, he declared war against the conspirators. Accompanied by a real or pretended son of the emperor, he invaded the Roman dominions with a large army. Dara, Mardin, Edessa, Amida were pillaged and destroyed ; Syria was laid waste ; Jerusalem taken, and the magnificent churches of St. Helena and Constantine destroyed by the flames. "The devout offerings of three hundred years," observes Gibbon, "were rifled in one sacrilegious day. The Patriarch Zechariah and the *true cross* were transported into Persia ; and the massacre of 90,000 Christians is imputed to the Jews and Arabs, who swelled the disorder of the Persian monarch. . . . Egypt itself, the only province which had been exempt since the time of Dioclesian from foreign and domestic wars, was again subdued by the successors of Cyrus. Pelusium, the key of that impervious country, was surprised by the cavalry of the Persians : they passed with impunity the innumerable channels of the Delta, and explored the long valley of the Nile from the Pyramids of Memphis to the confines of Ethiopia. Alexandria might have been relieved by a naval force ; but the archbishop and prefect embarked for Cyprus, and Khoosroo entered the second city of the empire, which still preserved a wealthy remnant of industry and commerce. His western trophy was erected, not on the walls of Carthage, but in the neighbourhood of Tripoli. The Greek

* Khoosroo paid Maurice the compliment of making him his father by adoption,—and some have erroneously asserted that he received in marriage a natural daughter of the Roman emperor.

colonies of Cyrene were finally extirpated ; and the conqueror, following the footsteps of Alexander, returned in triumph through the sands of the Libyan Desert. In the same campaign another army advanced from the Euphrates to the Thracian Bosphorus. Chalcedon surrendered after a long siege, and a Persian camp was maintained above ten years in the presence of Constantinople. The seacoast of Pontus, the city of Ancyra, and the isle of Rhodes, are enumerated among the conquests of the Great King ; and if Khoosroo had possessed any maritime power, his boundless ambition would have spread slavery and desolation over the provinces of Europe."

Such is the proud list of the victories of Khoosroo ; but the day of reverse was approaching. While his generals were carrying confusion into the heart of the Roman empire, the monarch himself, instead of watching over the safety of his extensive dominions, and studying to promote the happiness of his people, was revelling in the most extensive luxury. Every season had its palace fitted up with appropriate splendour ; and his countless treasures, his thrones of rich and exquisite materials, one of which,—the Tucht-dis,—was contrived to represent the twelve zodiacal signs and the twelve hours of the day,—his 12,000 women each of the rarest beauty,—his 50,000 noble horses,—his 1200 elephants,—his Arabian courser Shub-deez, fleetier than the wind,—his enchanting musician Barbud,—and, above all, the incomparable Shireen, his fascinating mistress, are subjects which have exhausted the imaginations of poets and historians among his countrymen. For thirty years his reign had been marked by an almost unparalleled course of prosperity, in a great measure to be ascribed to the distracted condition of the Roman empire under the rule of the despicable Phocas, and during the first feeble years of Heraclius. But though effeminate and luxurious in the palace, the latter was brave and skilful in the field ; and, roused to a sense of his danger, he awakened Khoosroo from his dream of pleasure by suddenly invading Persia. The end of six years beheld the Eastern monarch stripped of his conquests, and Persia overrun by enemies ; his palaces destroyed, his treasures plundered, his armies dispersed, and the slaves of his pleasures scattered,—all without one manly effort to retrieve his fortunes.

Alone, or only attended by a few of his women, he secretly abandoned the city of Dustajird and the troops which still guarded it, leaving every thing to the victorious Romans. Yet even in this fallen state he haughtily rejected the generous overtures of his conqueror, and spurned his exhortations to spare farther bloodshed, by agreeing to reasonable terms of accommodation. At length his own subjects, worn out with miseries, and disgusted with the obstinate selfishness of their sovereign, conspired with Siroes (or Sheroueh), his eldest son, and seized his person. His children were slaughtered before his eyes by the command of their inhuman brother, and the father, imprisoned in a dungeon, was put to death by the same authority. It was long, we are informed by the Zeenut al Tuareekk, ere any one could be found to execute the latter order; but at length Hoormuz, son of Murdou Shah, who had been slain by Khoosroo, offered his services. The aged monarch knew his hour was come, and as he bent his neck to the scimitar, exclaimed,—“It is just and proper that the son should slay the murderer of his father!” The assassin repaired forthwith to the prince and related what had occurred. “Ay,” replied Sheroueh, drawing his own weapon, “it is indeed just and proper for a son to slay his father’s murderer;” and with these words he killed the unfortunate Hoormuz on the spot.

The ephemeral rulers who intervened between the death of Khoosroo and the elevation to the throne of Yezdijird III. (the Isdigertes III. of Western authors) scarcely merit notice. The character of this prince was feeble, his descent uncertain, and he remained, like his immediate predecessors, a pageant in the hands of ambitious nobles. His reign, which commenced A. D. 632, was distinguished by events infinitely more important than the fall of a tyrant or the change of a dynasty; for the same torrent that swept the race of Sassan from a throne which they had occupied more than 430 years, abolished the ancient religion of Zoroaster, and established a law which has effected one of the most striking moral changes on mankind that the world has ever witnessed.

In the year of the Christian era 569, and during the reign of the great Nooshirwan, was born Mohammed, the future lawgiver and prophet of Arabia; and forty years thereafter, in the reign of that monarch’s grandson, he commenced the

promulgation of those doctrines which were destined in so short a time to regulate the policy, the morals, and the religion of Asia. In twenty years after his death the whole of Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and Persia had been forced to receive the Koran,—Africa had been invaded,—and the Roman eagles had fled before the crescent of the Saracens.

While the arms of Persia were everywhere triumphant, and while their monarch was revelling in the excess of enjoyment and the pride of insolent security, the first mutterings of that storm were heard which was to overthrow the fabric of the Sassanian power. On the banks of the Karasu the emperor received from the “Camel-driver of Mecca” a letter requiring him to abjure the errors of that faith in which his fathers had lived, and to embrace the religion of the one true God, whose prophet he declared himself to be. Indignant at a demand so insulting from one whose name he had never heard, the monarch tore the letter and threw it into the passing stream. The zealous Mohammedan* who records the circumstance attributes to this sacrilegious act all the miseries that imbibited the latter years of Khosaroo, and asserts that the waters of the river, which till then had supplied the means of irrigation to a large extent of country, shrank in horror into their present deep channel, where, he observes, they have ever since remained useless and accursed.

In their first attacks the Arabs were repulsed, and in one memorable action they lost their imprudent though zealous leader Abu Obeid. But the disasters which attended the passage of the Euphrates were repaired on the plains of Cadesia (or Kudseah); and the glories of Persia sank for ever when the celebrated standard of the Durufsh e Kawanee fell into the hands of the Moslems, and their scimitars scattered the followers of Zoroaster as the sand of the desert is driven by the whirlwind. The plunder was increased almost “beyond the estimate of fancy or of numbers” by the sack of Madayn; “and the naked robbers of the desert,” says Gibbon, “were suddenly enriched beyond the measure of their hope of knowledge.”

The carnage of Nahavund terminated the struggle. The loss of more than 100,000 men left Yezdijird no part but to

* The author of the *Zeanut al Taareekk*.

fly. After enduring some years the life of a miserable fugitive, and forced to fly from Meru, his last refuge, by the treachery of its governor, the unfortunate monarch reached a mill about eight miles distant from the city, where the owner, tempted by the richness of his robes and armour, put him to death while he slept; and the headless trunk of the last of the Sassanides was thrown by the murderer into the water-course of his mill. An emotion of reviving loyalty in the people of Meru produced an inquiry after the unfortunate sufferer; the body was discovered, embalmed, and sent to Istakhar to the sepulchre of his ancestors, and the miller fell a victim to the popular indignation. Thus ended the dynasty of the Sassanides, and with it, as a national faith, the religion of the Magi. Before proceeding with our subject, it may be interesting shortly to examine the character and tenets of the worship thus destroyed,—a worship which, in some shape or other, was probably coëval with the repeopling of the world after the Flood, and which, dating from the era of its most celebrated promulgator, had existed in Persia more than twelve hundred years.

CHAPTER IV.

Ancient Religion of Persia.

*Great Antiquity of the ancient Religion of Persia—Sabian Origin—General Doctrines of the Zendavesta—Other Sacred Books—Dabistan and Dastavir—Doubts of their Authenticity—Zoroaster—Opinions regarding him—Mission—Doctrines of the Zendavesta—First great Principle—Principles of Light and Darkness—Formation of the Universe—Fathers—Good and Evil Angels—First Man—Struggles between the Good and Evil Principles—Resurrection and Judgment of Mankind—Doctrines and Practice of the modern Ghobres or Parsees.

No religion except that of the Jews has experienced so little change in doctrine or in ritual as that of the ancient Persians. Originating in an age when history is lost in fable, and propagated by a succession of lawgivers, of whom little except the names remain, we find it as the faith professed by a long series of brilliant dynasties, and maintaining

itself through disaster and misfortune, till in our days it faintly appears in the persecuted sect of the Ghebres in Persia, or among the more fortunate and industrious Parsees of India.

The worship of the host of heaven was the earliest deviation from pure religion ; the first step towards adopting a visible object of adoration instead of the unseen and inscrutable Being, of whose existence there is a witness in every heart ; and such doubtless was the Sabian ritual, the earliest religion of the Magi. The substitution of fire,—the essence of light, in a form which might be constantly present,—for the celestial bodies, is another and not an unnatural gradation in the progress of idolatry.

The worship of fire is, by the Persian writers, particularly Ferdusi, attributed to Hoshung, the third monarch of the Paishdadian or fabulous kings. At all events its antiquity is not disputed ; but at whatever period it superseded the Sabian or Chaldean faith, vestiges of the latter may be traced throughout every subsequent change, in that fondness for the delusive science of astrology which, at the present moment, influences the people of the East as much as in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius.

We shall not fatigue our readers with a lengthened disquisition on the rites of the Magi. It is enough to state, that their principal doctrines were a belief in one God, all-powerful, all-good, beneficent, merciful, and just, whose vicegerents were the planets ; a fraternal affection for the whole human race, and a compassionate tenderness to the brute creation. Our business is rather to explain the ancient faith of Persia as it was restored or reformed by Zoroaster ; but, before entering on this subject, it may be proper to give some account of that lawgiver, and of the sacred books which are held to be the depositories of his religious code.

Of the few works connected with this subject that have reached our time, the Zendavesta, translated by M. du Perron, possesses the highest claim to authenticity, and comprehends in fact all which can be properly ascribed to that lawgiver himself. This production, which according to the Parsees was dictated by inspiration, consisted, as their tradition asserts, of twenty-one nosks or books, of which only one, the Vendidad (said to be the twentieth), is preserved entire, while of the others only a few fragments exist. It is

singular that, although often alluded to by the ancients, the writings of Zoroaster have never been particularly specified; nor does the name of the Zendavesta occur until about fifteen hundred years after it is supposed to have been published, when it is mentioned in the geographical treatise of Masoudi. The work itself was carefully concealed by the Parsees and Ghebre until M. du Perron drew it from its obscurity and presented it to the European world.

The Zendavesta is composed in a language of which there is no other specimen; the Zend differing in many respects from all other dialects ever used in Persia.* Although written in characters not unlike the Pehlevi, its structure closely resembles that of the Sanscrit.† It has forty-eight letters, corresponding in their powers with those of Indian extraction, including twelve vowels; while the Pehlevi has only nineteen characters and no vowels. A very great number of the words are pure Sanscrit; and altogether it appears to be a dialect (perhaps the Suraseni) of that radical language.

This circumstance seems to indicate that the author of the Avesta compiled his work under the influence of certain Hindoo prepossessions. Indeed the numerous traces of Indian superstition confirm the belief that Zoroaster borrowed a great part of his ideas from that country; while there are, at the same time, grounds to believe that he adopted several doctrines from the Pentateuch. The Parsees attribute many wonderful influences to the Zendavesta, and pretend that it contains the principles of all arts and sciences, although they are concealed under symbols and mysteries. The Vendidad, however, as has been already mentioned, is the only one of the books that is known and recognised as authentic, and it consists of a series of interrogatories proposed to Ormuzd by Zoroaster, with the corresponding replies. The whole is devoid of any pretension to literary merit,—a deficiency which vouches in some degree for the fact of its being the work of an early age. The circumstance that it is often referred to with high respect in the other books of the Zendavesta, while it proves that they are of a later date, affords also an additional testimony in favour of the antiquity of the former.

The Zendavesta, generally speaking, consists of a series

* See Erskine's Letter to Sir John Malcolm in the *Bombay Literary Transactions*.

† *Ibid.*

of liturgic services for various occasions, rather than of matter which would lead us to regard it as an original work on religion ; and, as the Abbé Foucher well remarks, " bears exactly the same reference to the books of Zoroaster that our missals and breviaries do to the Bible." The Abbé and Mr. Erskine agree in referring even the most ancient portion of it to a period long posterior to the genuine works of Zoroaster, but still are inclined to place that period as far back as the restoration of the Persian religion in the reign of Ardeshir Babegan.

In Pehlevi there are extant translations of four of the books of Zoroaster,—the Vendidad, the Vespered, the Yesht, and Khundavesta. There are, besides, three more books in the same language,—the Viraf Nameh, a description of the Parsee paradise and hell, ascribed to the reign of Ardeshir Babegan ; the Boundehesh, an account of the creation according to the ideas of the same sect ; and a tale of Ak-hez Jadoo, with the Destoor Gush Perian, a still later production.

Within these few years have been published two other books on the same subject,—the Dabistan and the Dessaateer. The former professes to be a compilation as well from Pehlevi manuscripts as from verbal communications made by professors of the religion of Zoroaster, and executed about one hundred and fifty years ago by Sheik Mohammed Mosheim Fani, a native of Cashmere. It contains a history of twelve different superstitions, commencing with that of Hoshung, who introduced the worship of fire. Sir John Malcolm derives all that is known of the Paishdadian dynasties, as well as those supposed to precede them, from this source. But he admits that the author betrays a suspiciously strong disposition to connect the ancient history of the Persians with that of the Hindoos ; adding, that such doubts are increased by the character of the sheik, who, though professing Mohammedanism, was in truth a Sooffee, and an avowed believer in the doctrines of the Bramins.

Mr. Erskine does more than participate in these doubts. In an excellent essay,* containing a critical examination into the claims of the Dabistan and Dessaateer to authenticity, he sets the subject at rest, as we conceive, by proving that the

* *Bombay Literary Transactions*, vols. i. and ii.

work of Moshein Fani, so far as it refers to the religion of fire, is only a transcript of the doctrines of the Dessaeteer, strongly tinged with a cast of ascetic Soofeeism. It is probably the composition of one or more individuals of an Indian sect called Sipasees, who owed their origin, in the sixteenth century, to Azer Kerwan, and professed an extremely wild and superstitious doctrine. It would exceed our limits to detail the arguments of Mr. Erskine, and we therefore take leave to refer our readers to the original communication.

The Dessaeteer, the work to which the Dabistan so frequently alludes, is written in an unknown language,* and is said to be a compilation of treatises on the religion of Maha-bad by fifteen successive prophets, the last of whom, Sassan, who flourished in the reign of Khoosroo Purvees, translated the original text into Persian. This volume was discovered, we are informed, by Mollah Ferose, a learned Parsee priest residing in Bombay, while inspecting some old manuscripts at Ispahan. The work, which is called sacred, is filled with rhapsodies in praise of the Creator, the sun, moon, and planets. It has been lately translated into English;† but the question of its authenticity has been so satisfactorily decided by the acute and judicious reasoning of Mr. Erskine, that it would be a waste of time to discuss it further. Our notice of the history and religion of Zoroaster will therefore rest exclusively on the authorities already mentioned.

The doctrines, both theological and philosophical, of this distinguished sage were familiarly known to the ancients; for, though not particularly described, his works are frequently referred to. But a considerable diversity of opinion has prevailed regarding the era in which he flourished. Some, believing that there were more than one individual of this name, maintain that the appellation was assumed by a succession of lawgivers. But that it was borne by at least two persons of celebrity is asserted by several of the learned; and the Abbé Foucher,‡ on the authority of Pliny, supports

* To this an interlineary Persian translation is annexed in the published work. Various conjectures have been formed regarding this language; but the clear proof of spuriousness which attaches to the work itself sets them at rest.

† Mr. Erskine rendered this service to the lovers of Oriental inquiry.

‡ *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, vol. xxvii., xxix., xxxi., xxxix.

this idea as the only one which can explain the conflicting facts that have been related regarding him. The learned Frenchman supposes the first Zoroaster to have been a native of Rhe or Rhegis in Media; that he established his religion in Bactriana, under Cyaxares I.,—built a great fire-temple in Balkh, called Azer Gushtasp,—and was put to death with all his inferior priests during an incursion of the Scythians, about the year B. C. 630. The second Zoroaster, according to the Abbé, appeared in the reign of Darius. He conceives him to have been a disciple of Daniel, or of some other Jewish prophet, and that he may have been one of the twenty-four apostates seen in a vision by Ezekiel, as adoring the rising sun; moreover, that, being a person of powerful mind, he insinuated himself into the favour of Cyrus, and was made Archimagus; in which capacity he restored and confirmed the ancient religion of the country, and became the author of several books called Ibrahim Zerdusht.

Anquetil du Perron, on the other hand, maintains that there never was more than one Zoroaster or Zerdusht, who was a native of Urumeah; and that he flourished in the sixth century before Christ, and in the reign of Darius Hystaspes.* He supposes him to have been born about the year B. C. 589, and to have been engaged in “consulting Ormuzd,” that is, maturing his religious code, between the thirtieth and fortieth year of his age. After this he lived thirty-seven years, when he was put to death by the Scythians, as is related by the Persian historians, in the year 512 before the Christian era. In this calculation M. du Perron is supported by the learned Hyde and Dean Prideaux, who derive their opinion from the Greek and Latin authors; although some of these conceive the transactions rather to have occurred in the reign of the son of Hystaspes. According to the learned Frenchman, Zoroaster retired to compile his Zendavesta in the Elburz† Mountains, whence he carried it to Darius at Balkh;

* Académie des Inscriptions, vol. xxxvii. See also vol. xxxi., and his Life of Zoroaster prefixed to the Zendavesta, where he enters into an account of the lawgiver's family, and details the acts of his life with a minuteness somewhat liable to suspicion, when we consider that the events of the age it refers to are little better than a blank in history. We therefore make no extracts, contenting ourselves with indicating the sources of further information.

† There is a peak of the Caucasus named Elburz, but, as we have seen, the name applies to many Persian mountains.

and the monarch caused the work to be transcribed on twelve thousand well-prepared cow-hides, and transported them to Istakhar, as the only fit receptacle of so valuable a deposit. The story of his Jewish origin he treats as a slander of the Mohammedans.

He farther conceives, that the first Zoroaster alluded to by Pliny, and by him as well as by other Greek and Latin authors referred to a very remote age, was no other than the Heomo of the Zend,—the Hom of the Parsees,—a personage who makes no small figure in the sacred books of the latter, and who first proposed his tenets as a national creed to the Paishdadian king Jumsheed. The second Zoroaster, placed by the Oriental, Christian, and Mohammedan historians, under the reign of Cambyses, he fixes, as we have said, by a variety of evidence, to the year B. C. 558.

The religion of ancient Persia is considered by M. du Perron as divisible into two periods. The first commences in the time of Jumsheed, when Hom, the tutelar genius of the law, who lived in the time of that monarch's father, presented it to the young king; but the prince was so much alarmed by the strict observances and ceremonies required, that he remonstrated* with Ormuzd, and would only agree to adopt its moral principles in the government of his realm on condition that during his reign misery and death should disappear from the world. This singular compromise was agreed to; and the law continued on this imperfect footing until the appearance of the true Zoroaster,—some adhering to the worship of fire as a symbol of the Deity, others abandoning themselves to an adoration of the stars, of idols, or of deeves.

To revive the original purity of the law, to perfect its doctrines, and enforce its observances, were the objects for which this sage, according to his own declaration, was specially sent. He collected and arranged the dogmas which constituted the fundamental part of the creed, adding such precepts as he obtained from Ormuzd, and adapting to the mortal injunctions a ritual fully as severe as that of any religious code upon record. What the nature of this theological system was we can only judge from the scanty documents that have escaped

* In the same way Mohammed remonstrated with the angel Gabriel concerning the excessive frequency of prayers at first enjoined on the Faithful. At his instance they were reduced to five daily periods.

the waste of time and the wreck of destructive revolutions; and how far even these are authentic is a question which, as we have seen, has greatly divided the learned.

The Avesta of Zoroaster, according to M. du Perron, sets out by declaring the existence of a great first principle which it calls Zerwan, an expression which is understood to denote Time,—Time without beginning and without end. This incomprehensible being is author of the two great active powers of the universe,—Ormuzd, the principle of all good, and Ahriman, the principle of all evil; and the question, why light and darkness, good and evil, were mingled together by a beneficent and omnipotent Creator, has been as much controverted among the Magian priesthood as by modern metaphysicians.

Another subject of dispute was the manner in which the creative energy was exerted. Was the universe formed by means of emanations from the Divinity himself, or by modifications of pre-existent matter? M. du Perron conceives Zoroaster to have denied the latter conjecture; for the Avesta declares that Ormuzd arose from the pure elements of fire and water, and that these beings were of all things first produced by the Eternal,—the fire self-shining, brilliant, dazzling; the water pure, unutterably soft, beneficent, and of a golden hue. The first of these appears to have been regarded as a mysterious cause of union between the Eternal and Ormuzd; representing the omnipotent agency of the former, and furnishing the active principle of the latter. The word Ormuzd—Ehor Mezdao! signifies great king; and his epithets are “luminous,” “brilliant.” He is perfectly pure, intelligent, just, powerful, active, and beneficent,—in a word, the precise image of the Eternal; the centre and author of the perfections of all nature; the first creative agent produced by the Self-Existent.

Ahriman is directly the opposite of this. His name and epithets import essential wickedness; a being occupied in perverting and corrupting every thing good. He is said to be “enveloped in crime,”—“the source of misery and evil.” In the Zendavesta, Ormuzd gives the following metaphorical picture of his rival:—He is alone, wicked, impure, accursed. He has long knees, a long tongue, and is void of good.” He is called a king, however, and stated to be “without end.” He is, in short, the coexistent and almost

coequal opponent of Ormuzd,—independent of him, and alone capable of resisting him. The latter can neither destroy him nor prevent his constant efforts to annihilate or embarrass the beings produced by the power of good, and to banish justice and virtue from the earth. It is no easy matter to comprehend the explanations given of the nature of Ahriman, nor the arguments used to relieve the Eternal from the charge of having willed the creation of a being so malevolent. At one time he is described as being so essentially wicked, that were it possible to deprive him of life his component parts would unite themselves to their original elements,—earth to earth, water to water, air to air, and so on; in consequence of which all would be infected without producing any advantage. But in another place he is represented as a power originally good, but who, like Lucifer, fell from that high estate through rebellion and disobedience. M. du Perron concludes, that Zoroaster meant to assign priority of existence to Ahriman; that, full of his own perfections, and blinded as to the extent of his power, when he beheld in Ormuzd a being of equal might, jealousy rendered him furious, and he rushed into evil, seeking the destruction of every thing calculated to exalt his rival's glory. The Great Ruler of events, displeased at his arrogance, condemned him to inhabit that portion of space unillumined by light. Ormuzd, as he sprung into existence, saw his malicious adversary, and made vain efforts to annihilate him. The Eternal bestowed on him the power of calling into being a pâtre world; while, as if the impulses of good and evil were simultaneous, Ahriman immediately opposed to it a world of impurity.

The instrument employed by the Almighty in giving an origin to these opposite principles, as well as in every subsequent creative act, was his Word. This sacred and mysterious agent, which in the Zendavesta is frequently mentioned under the appellations *Honover* and *I am*, is compared to those celestial birds which constantly keep watch over the welfare of nature. Its attributes are ineffable light, perfect activity, unerring prescience. Its existence preceded the formation of all things,—it proceeds from the first eternal principle,—it is the gift of God. Ordained to create and govern the universe, Ormuzd received the Word, which in his mouth became an instrument of infinite power and fruit-

fulness. "I pronounce the Honover continually, and in all its might," Ormuzd says to Zoroaster in the Zendavesta, "and abundance is multiplied." The speculations of M. du Perron on the nature of this Word, which cannot fail to bring to the reader's mind the *I am* of the Old and the Word of the New Testament, give support to the opinion that the author of the Zendavesta meant it to be understood as a being distinct from Zerwan or the Eternal, as well as from Ormuzd.

According to the system of cosmogony in the Zendavesta, the duration of the present universe is fixed at twelve thousand years, which is subdivided into four terms; and to each of these is appropriated a peculiar series of events. During the first period, Ormuzd, alarmed by the appearance of Ahriman "at an immeasurable distance beneath him, covered with filth and putridity," employed himself in creating the universe and the celestial inhabitants. Of these beings, the first were Feroheres, or the spiritual prototypes,—the unembodied angels,*—of every reasonable being destined to appear upon earth. The Feroheres of the law, of Iran, and of Zoroaster, were the most precious in his eyes; for the law, the expression of the divine word, and Iran, which was to be its theatre, were held as ranking high in the scale of intelligent creatures, as well as Zoroaster, its future promulgator.

Ahriman, alarmed at these new instances of power, flew with malign intent towards the light; but a single enunciation of the Honover sent him howling back to darkness, where he immediately called into being a number of devils and evil spirits,† designed to oppose the works of Ormuzd. A proposal of peace, and an exhortation to resume the paths of virtue, were met by him with scorn and defiance; and his rival, in self-defence, produced six amshaspunds, or superior guardian angels, pure, beneficent, eternal.—"Protect my flocks and herds, O man of God!" said the holy Bahman, to whose charge was intrusted the animal creation, to Zoroaster. "These I received from the Almighty; these I commit to you; let not the young be slain, nor those that are still useful."

* It will afterward be seen, that a great distinction was made between the Feroher and the complete soul, of which the Feroher formed but one component part.

† The Vendidad makes their number amount to 99,990.

"Servant of the Most High!" exclaimed the dazzling Ar-dibhehsht, the genius of fire and light, " speak to the royal Gushtasp for me ; say that to thee I have confided all fires. Ordain the Mobuds, the Dustoors, and Herbooks,* to preserve them, and neither to extinguish them in the water nor in the earth ; bid them erect in every city a temple of fire, and celebrate in honour of that element the feasts ordained by law. The brilliancy of fire is from God ; and what is more beautiful than that element ? It requires only wood and odours. Let the young and the old give these, and their prayers shall be heard. I transfer it to thee as I received it from God. Those who do not fulfil my words shall go to the infernal regions."

Shahriwar, the spirit of the metal and the mine, spoke next :—" Oh thou pure man ! when thou art on the earth tell all men my words ; bid those who carry the lance, the sword, the dagger, and the mace, clean them each year, that the sight of them may put to flight those that cherish bad designs. Tell them never to place confidence in wicked men, nor in their enemies."

Espendermad, the female guardian of the earth, exclaimed,—" Thou shalt be as a blessing unto mankind, preserve the earth from blood, uncleanness, and from carcasses ; carry such where the soil is not cultivated, and where neither man nor water passeth ; fruits in abundance shall reward labour, and the best king is he who rendereth the earth most fertile. Say this unto men from me."

The angel Kourdad, who diffuses the blessings of running streams, next said, "I confide to thee, O Zoroaster ! the water that flows ; that which is stagnant ; the water of rivers ; that which comes from afar and from the mountains ; the water from rain and from springs. Instruct men that it is water which gives strength to all living things. It makes all verdant. Let it not be polluted with any thing dead or impure, that your victuals, boiled in pure water, may be healthy. Execute thus the words of God."

Last spoke Amerdad, who watches over the growth of plants and trees,—" O Zoroaster ! bid men not destroy nor pull, except in season, the plants and fruits of the earth, for these were meant as a blessing and a support to men and to animals."

* Different orders of priests.

Such were the six first angels of Ormuzz ; but no sooner had they appeared, than six deeves arose from darkness at the voice of Ahriman, to counteract their influence. In contests three thousand years more elapsed ; towards the termination of which, Ormuzd called into being the heavens and their celestial systems,—the earth with its complicated productions ; and fire was given as the representative of that divine and original element which animates all nature. Serrooch, the guardian of the earth, and Behram, armed with a mighty club and arrows, were formed to repel the attacks of Ahriman. Mythra, the mediator between Ormuzd and his creatures,* and Rash in Rast, the genius of justice, with multitudes of spirits, were called forth to assist in repelling the powers of darkness, and angels were appointed to protect every being. The stars and planets, the months of the year, the days and even watches of the day, had each their attendant spirit,—all nature teems with them,—all space is pervaded by them.

In consequence of the services of these intermediate intelligences, a period of peace and tranquillity ensued. The year was one uninterrupted day, nor did change of weather or of season perplex the world ; but it was a delusive calm ; and the cause that reawakened the malignant activity of Ahriman was the creation of man. The Feroher being delighted with the harmony which reigned on the earth, Ormuzd proposed that he should descend thither and assist in eradicating evil, promising that the souls of human beings should finally return to their divine mansions. The Feroher obeyed, and was embodied under the form of the sacred bull,—Aboudad, the Man Bull, the Excellent, the Pure, the Principle of all Good. Ahriman in the depths of hell trembled at this intelligence. Stimulated by his deeves, and par-

* It is not clear at what time Mythra was created, nor what was the precise nature of his functions. But M. du Perron, who has examined the subject at large, concludes that his office is to oppose continually the powers of evil ; for which he is provided with 1000 ears, and 10,000 eyes, and flits between heaven and earth armed with a massive club. He is the source of light, provides the sun for the use of the earth, distributes the waters to their proper courses, preserves harmony on earth, watches over the law, defends the soul after death from the touch of impure spirits, and is a mediator between Ormuzd and his creatures. He is associated with, or rather superior to, the amshaspunds.

ticularly by the evil genius Djé, he mustered his spirits, and, ascending in the form of a monstrous serpent, covered the earth with noxious animals. In the shape of a huge fly he polluted every thing, and insinuated the poison of evil into all nature. By means of a burning drought he parched the face of the whole earth, and caused his deeves to strike the sacred bull with a fatal wound. But the benevolent design of Ormuzd was not to be defeated. From the right limb of the dying beast issued Kayomurz the first man; and from the rest of its members sprung a multitude of those vegetable productions destined to render the earth fruitful. Its seed, carried to the moon, and purified by Ormuzd, produced a bull and a cow, from whence all animals took their origin.

Kayomurz was of lofty aspect, pure, and of dazzling substance. His body was composed of the four elements,—fire, air, water, and earth. Ormuzd to this perishable frame added an immortal spirit, and the being was complete. The soul of man, instead of a simple essence,—a spark of that eternal light which animates all things,—consists, according to the philosophy of Zoroaster, of five separate parts, each having peculiar offices,—

1. The Feroher, or principle of sensation.
2. The Boe, or principle of intelligence.
3. The Rouh, or Rouan, the principle of practical judgment,—imagination,—volition.
4. The Akho, or principle of conscience.
5. The Jan, or principle of animal life.

When the four first of these, which cannot subsist in the body without the last, abandon their earthly abode, the Jan mingles with the winds, and the Akho returns to heaven with the celestial Rouhs (or spirits); because, its office being continually to urge man to do good and shun evil, it can have no part in the guilt of the soul, whatever that may be. The Boe, the Rouan, and the Feroher, united together, are the only principles which are accountable for the deeds of the man, and which are accordingly to be examined at the day of judgment. If good predominates, they go to heaven; if evil, they are despatched to hell. The body is regarded as a mere instrument in the power of the Rouan, and therefore not responsible for its acts. After death the Akho has a separate existence, as the Feroher had previous to birth.

Such is the soul of man according to the Zendavesta, and such was Kayomurz, created (as the word implies) to be immortal, and sprinkled by Ormuzd with the water of Khei, which rendered him beautiful as a youth of fifteen years. But neither his comeliness nor the power of Ormuzd could avert the malice of Ahriman, who, at the end of thirty years, and after a severe conflict of ninety days and nights, succeeded in destroying him. But the principle of regeneration being preserved, and confided to the tutelar genius of fire, was purified by the light of the sun, and after forty years produced a tree or plant representing two human bodies. These were Maschia and Maschiana, the parents of the human race. The names, according to M. du Perron, are derived from a word signifying death; and, though they proceeded from the seed of Kayomurz, they were yet deemed children of the earth, which nourished the tree, and of the heavens, which bedewed it.*

But though created pure, and capable of perfect and permanent felicity, Maschia and Maschiana were tempted to rebel and to worship Ahriman instead of their creator Ormuzd. They thus became Darvund, and their souls were doomed to remain in hell until the resurrection. The earth was overrun by Kharfesters (or evil spirits invested with bodies), who inhabited its caverns and recesses. A flood was sent which destroyed them; but from their foul remains arose noisome animals, reptiles, poisons, and putridity. The unhappy pair plunged still more deeply into sin. Listening to the continued temptations of Ahriman, they drank the milk of a goat (which appears to have been an incarnation of himself); they ate forbidden fruit, thereby forfeiting their few remaining privileges; and poured libations of milk to the powers of darkness in the North. They were separated, but at the end of fifty years again met, and had a couple of children, who multiplied and peopled the whole earth.

The power of evil increased with the growth of the universe; nor was any beneficent influence sufficient to arrest its course. The intimate union of the two principles in all things rendered it impossible to destroy the works of Ahriman, who himself was indestructible. So Ormuzd resolved to snatch from his hands the creatures who had been so

* This vain and complicated mythology is supposed, by M. du Perron, to have been invented subsequent to the time of Zoroaster.

bitterly persecuted ; and in order to fortify them against the future efforts of the Evil One, he gave his law to be promulgated by Zoroaster.

In these struggles must elapse the third period of the duration of the universe ; the power of Ormuzd and Ahriman being equally balanced. During the fourth period, the latter is to prevail ; misery and desolation shall brood over the earth ; and three prophets shall appear, under the last of whom, named Sosioch, a rain of black water shall precede the renewal of nature, the resurrection of mankind, and the final judgment.

But annihilation, even for a time, forms no part of the doctrine of Zoroaster. At death the materials of the body rejoin their respective elements,—earth to earth,—water to water,—fire to fire,—and the life to the viewless air. The last hour is thus stripped of its terrors to the Parsee, by the conviction that nothing is reduced to nonentity. For three days after dissolution the soul flits round its tenement of clay in hopes of a reunion. On the fourth the angel Seroch appears, and conducts it to the bridge of Chinevad. On this structure, which connects earth and heaven, sits the angel of justice, Rash in Rast, to weigh the actions of mortals ; and, according to his decision, the heavenly dog permits it to cross and join the souls of its ancestors in heaven, or precipitates it into the gulf of hell, which yawns below. When the good deeds prevail, the soul is met on the bridge by a dazzling figure, which says, “I am thy good angel (Kherdar),—I was pure originally, but thy good deeds have rendered me purer ;” and passing its hand over the neck of the blessed soul, leads it to paradise. If the iniquities preponderate, it is met by a hideous spectre, which howls out, “I am thy evil Kherdar,—impure myself, thy sins have rendered me more foul ; through thee shall we become miserable until the resurrection :” on which it drags the sinning spirit to hell, where Ahriman taunts it with its folly and crimes.

The resurrection, however, is the true triumph of Ormuzd and his worshippers, and one of the most essential articles of their belief. In that day Kayomurz will first arise, then Maschia and Maschiana. The judgment of mankind is to occupy a space of fifty-seven years. The genii of the elements, which have received in deposite the various sub-

stances of the body, must render up their trust ; the soul will recognise its earthly companion and re-enter it ; the juice of the herb Hom, and the milk of the bull Heziosk, will restore life to man, who then becomes immortal. Then takes place the final separation of the good and evil. Sinners who have not in the intermediate state expiated their faults are again sent to hell, but not for eternal punishment. The tortures of three awful days and nights, equal to an agony of three thousand years, suffice for the purification of the most wicked. The voice of the damned, ascending to heaven, will find mercy in the soul of Ormuzd, who will withdraw them from the place of torment. The world shall melt with fervent heat, and the liquid and glowing metals shall purify the universe, and fit all beings for everlasting felicity. To the just this ordeal proves as a pleasant bath of milk-warm water ; the wicked, on the other hand, shall suffer excruciating agonies, but it will be the last of their miseries. Hell itself and all its demons shall be cleansed ; Ahriman, no longer irreclaimable, will be converted to goodness, and become a ministering spirit of the Most High.

Such, according to the Zendavesta, is a sketch of the system of cosmogony and theology promulgated by Zoroaster,—in all probability compiled and reformed in some degree from the ancient religion of the Magi.

The doctrines and practice of the Ghebres and Parsees of the present day differ little from the above code. They adore Ormuzd as the author of all good ; they inculcate purity in thought, word, and action. They reverence all the angels, subordinate spirits, and agents of that good principle ; and endless prayers are prescribed in their liturgies, with all the solemn words to be used, not only for important occasions, but also in the most trifling functions of life. The visible objects of their veneration are the elements, especially that of fire ; and light is regarded as the noblest symbol of the Supreme Being, who is without form or limits. The sun, moon, planets, and stars, and even the heavens themselves, obtain particular respect ; and in praying they turn to them, and especially to the rising sun. They have no temples nor images, nor paintings of Ormuzd or his angels. The Atish-khudahs are merely edifices for guarding the sacred fire from defilement or extinction : in these the flame is kept burning ;

it is approached with the greatest reverence ; and their most awful rites are practised before it. These houses are so constructed that the sun's rays never fall on the sacred fire.

There are in India two species of that element, termed the Behram and Adiram ; the former should be composed of 1001 different sorts ; the latter of at least fifteen or sixteen. These various kinds are enumerated,—as fire generated by rubbing wood and iron together, that taken from a kitchen, from a funeral pile,* and so on. The Behram fire is found in only three places ; the Adiram fires are much more numerous. Each temple has but one sacred blaze, before which daily prayers are read. There are also occasional services, as that for the dead, and some for the living, which are solemnly recited. The great fire, whether of the first or second sort, is maintained by all Parsees in India, as before it certain ceremonies are always performed. Particular parts of their liturgy are repeated by the priest alone, standing or sitting, in long white garments, having his mouth covered with a piece of white cloth, to prevent the saliva from dropping or spitting out on the pure element while he chants the suitable texts.

Of these priests there are various classes,—Dustoors, Mobuds, and Herbooks. The first are of the highest order,—for there are now neither Dustooran-Dustoor, nor Mobud-Mobudan (high priests),—and they are the doctors and expounders of the law. The others are of inferior rank, the latter being chiefly employed in performing certain menial offices in the fire-houses. The priesthood is hereditary in families of a particular tribe ; they have no fixed salaries, being paid voluntarily for each service as it occurs, and many of them follow secular occupations.

In their religious rites much use is made of a kind of holy water named *zor*, held powerful in repelling evil spirits. The *hom*, too, which is the consecrated juice of a particular shrub and prepared with many ceremonies, is believed to be of singular efficacy, and is often mentioned in the sacred volumes. A drop of this is given to infants to cleanse them from the impurities of the womb, as likewise to persons at the point of death.

The naming of a child is an occasion of little ceremony ;

* This must be an Indian excrescence, since the ancient Persians did not burn their dead.

but the putting on the sacred cord (*kusti*), and the equally sacred shirt (*sadra*), is a very solemn act: these form the armour against Ahriman. The Parsees do not tolerate polygamy, unless the first wife prove barren; nor do their laws allow concubinage. They cannot eat or drink out of the same vessel with one of a different religion, nor are they fond even of using the cup of another, for fear of partaking of his sins. Their religion, however, admits of proselytism. They have no fasts, and reject every thing of the nature of penance. God, they say, delights in the happiness of his creatures; and they hold it meritorious to enjoy the best of every thing they can obtain. Birds and beasts of prey, the dog, and the hare, are forbidden as food. Their faith inculcates general benevolence: to be honest in bargains: to be kind to one's cattle, and faithful to masters; to give the priests their due, physicians their fees,—and these last are enjoined to try their sanitary experiments on infidels before practising on Parsees. By the Vendidad, dogs and cocks are held in great regard as animals who watch the approach of evil spirits, against which the disciples of Zoroaster are constantly on their guard; on the other hand, it is meritorious to kill serpents, frogs, toads, and other reptiles, as being the creatures of Ahriman.

The Parsees and Ghebres never willingly throw filth either into fire or water: even the trade of a smith is proscribed among them by custom, though not by law; nor will they use fire-arms, which they allege defile that element; still less will they extinguish a fire. Yet when the flames are destroying their property, they have, in recent times, been known to work hard in putting them out.* This reverence for the elements prevents them from being sailors, as in a long voyage they might be forced to defile the sea.

When a relation is dying they recite over him prescribed prayers, and have a dog at hand to drive away the evil spirits that flock around the bed. After death, the body is dressed in old but clean clothes, and conveyed on an iron frame to the tomb, on the shoulders of bearers, who are tied together with a piece of tape, in order to deter the demons, which are supposed to be hovering near, from molesting the corpse. It is well known that they neither burn nor bury their dead. They have circular towers, called dockmehs, in which are constructed inclined planes; and on these they expose the

* This occurred in the great fire at Bombay in 1803; and the writer of this work has seen them do the same at a later period in Calcutta.

bodies, courting the fowls of the air to feed upon them. They even draw auguries regarding the happiness or misery of the deceased, according as the left or the right eye is first pecked out by the vultures.

Such are a few particulars relative to the religious customs of the modern Ghebres, which do not essentially differ from those recorded as belonging to the religion of Zoroaster. Of that faith we shall only further remark, that its author has obviously drawn largely upon the systems both of the Jews and of the Hindoos, engrafting what he culled from each on the Chaldean stem, which he found ready flourishing, although overgrown by errors. The intricate ritual, the multiplication of ceremonies, and the adoption of the mysterious Monover, are clearly of Hebrew derivation. The greater part of the mythology, particularly the fable of the sacred bull, with many of the superstitions, and above all the Sanscrit origin of the Zend itself, proclaim their Hindoo extraction; while the whole of the cosmogony, together with the high rank assigned to the celestial bodies and planetary system, attest an Assyrian lineage.

CHAPTER V.

Antiquities of Persia.

Antiquities divisible into two Classes—First Class—Persepolis described—The Tombs of the Kings—Opinions regarding the Ruins—Istakhar—Cuneiform Inscriptions—Deciphered (?)—Mourghab—Musjed e Madre Solymam—The Tomb of Cyrus—Bessiteon—Ecbatana—Second Class—Sassanian Monuments—Tank e Bostam—The Work of Ferhand—Khoosroo and Shireen—Shapoor and its Sculptures—Statue there—Nakash e Rootsum and Nakash e Rejib.

THE antiquities of a country are so closely connected with its early annals and religion, that, before resuming our historical sketch, we shall give a short description of the most remarkable remains in Persia. Few celebrated empires are so poor in monuments of ancient greatness; and the deficiency is the more extraordinary, as all that survive are so solid as in a great measure to bid defiance, not only to age, but even to the more destructive hand of man, and at the

same time so magnificent as to convey a high idea of the taste and skill of those who constructed them. The antiquities of Persia may be divided into two classes referring to different periods; those antecedent to the conquest of Alexander, and those belonging to the era of the Sasanides. There are a few connected with the early Arabian conquerors; but these have been mentioned in treating of the provinces where they occur.

GROUND-PLAN OF PERSEPOLIS.

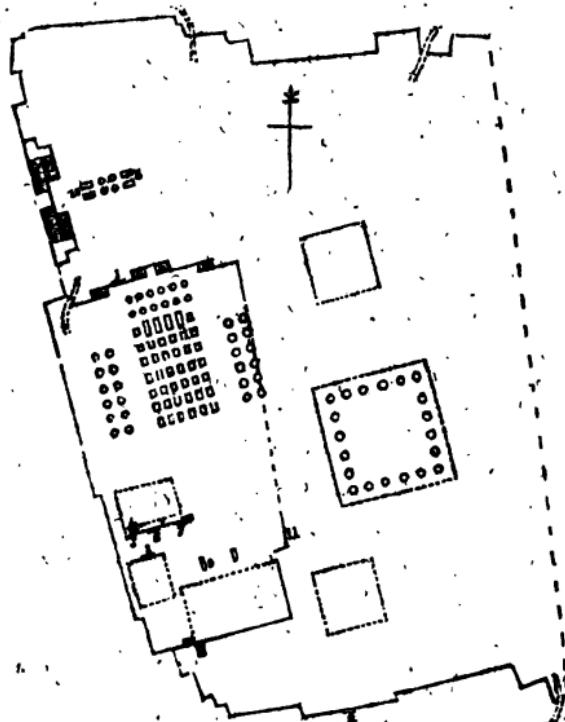
1 and 2, Inscriptions copied by Niebuhr.

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, Inscriptions copied by Mr. Rich.

10, 11, Inscriptions not yet copied.

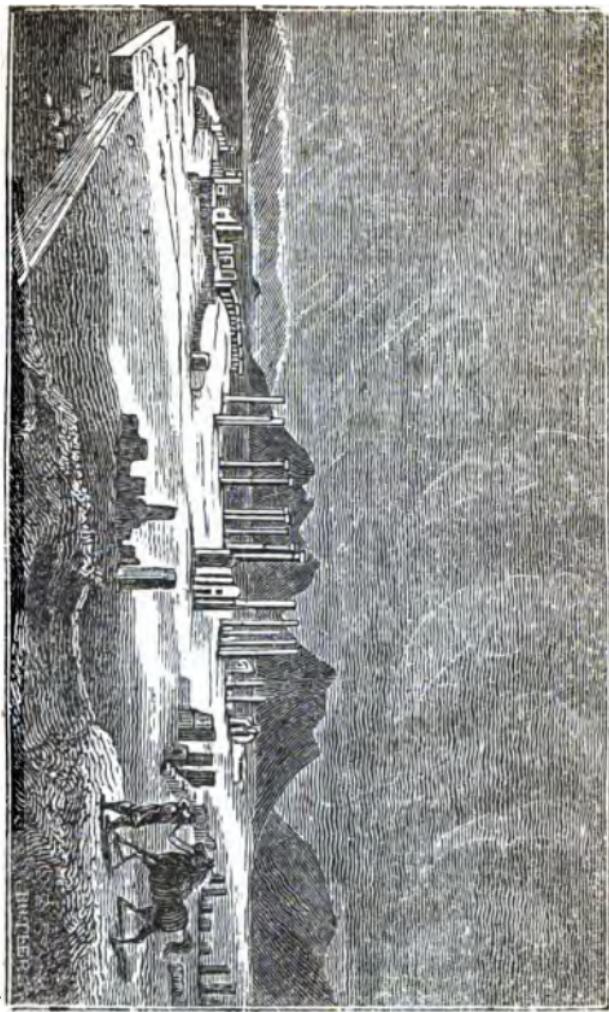
The lines dotted thus ----- have not been surveyed.

The following marks - - - - - are employed to indicate places where there is no wall.



Scale.—One inch equal to 500 feet.

VIEW OF THE RUINS OF PERSEPOLIS FROM NEAR THE TUMBLE OF THE KINGS.





Of the first class, by far the most interesting and extensive, are the ruins of Persepolis, termed by the natives the Tucht-e Jumsheed, or Chehel Minar,—a fabric which for ages has excited the admiration and employed the descriptive talents of travellers, while it has afforded matter of vain though curious speculation to the learned. Nothing can be more striking than the appearance of these ruins on approaching them from the south-west. Placed at the base of a rugged mountain, on a terrace of masonwork that might vie with the structures of Egypt, it overlooks an immense plain, enclosed on all sides by distant but dark cliffs, and watered by the Kour Ab, which once supplied 1000 aqueducts. But the watercourses are choked up; the plain is a morass or a wilderness; for the great city, which once poured its population over the wide expanse of Merducht, has disappeared, and the gray columns rise in solitary grandeur, to remind us that mighty deeds were done in the days of old.

The terrace on which these architectural remains repose is of an irregular form, as may be seen from the accompanying ground-plan. The west front, which overlooks the plain, is 1425 feet long; the northern is 926 feet, and the southern 802: * the height appears to have varied from twenty-five to fifty feet, according to the inequalities of the ground. The surface has become very uneven (if indeed it ever was otherwise) by the drifting dust and the fallen fragments. The only ascent to this platform is on its western side, by a magnificent staircase, formed of two double flights of steps. Of these the lowest, consisting each of fifty-five, † twenty-two feet long, and three inches and a half deep, meet in a landing-place of thirty-seven feet by forty-four. From this point springs a second double flight of forty-eight steps of similar dimensions, which terminate on the level of the platform, in a second landing-place of sixty-four feet long.‡ The ascent

* These measurements, as well as the greater part of the details, are taken from Sir Robert Ker Porter, and confirmed by the author's own observations.

† Niebuhr says fifty-seven in the lower, and forty-seven in the upper flights, each four inches high. He adds, that the height together is thirty-three feet; but his own data would give thirty-four feet eight inches.

‡ Niebuhr says he saw holes in the large stones of the landing-place, as if for gates; and conjectures that the whole platform may have been under lock and key: in which case there must have been parapet walls to the terrace; but there seems little ground for thinking so.

is so gradual, that travellers usually ride up on horseback; and the blocks of marble are so large, that from ten to fourteen steps are cut out of each.*

Having reached this landing-place, the stranger beholds a gigantic portal formed of two massive walls, with the front and interior faces sculptured into the resemblance of colossal animals. The length of it is twenty-one feet, its height thirty, and the walls are twelve[†] feet apart, the groundway being paved with slabs of polished marble. The animals stand on a pedestal, which elevates them five feet. Their heads are so mutilated, that it is impossible to say what they were meant to represent;‡ their necks are decorated with collars of roses; short curled hair covers the chest, back, and ribs; and the workmanship is singularly correct and delicate.

Twenty feet eastward from this portal stood four handsome fluted columns with beautiful capitals, about forty-five feet high and twenty-two feet apart; but only two remain, and not a relic of the others is to be seen. Another space intervenes between these columns and a second portal, resembling the first, save that the walls are only eighteen feet long, while the figures on the eastern side appear to have had human faces adorned with diadems; their beards are still visible, and wings, of which the huge plumage is exquisitely cut, extend high above their backs.

There is an interval of one hundred and sixty-two feet between the right of these portals and the terrace which supports the groups of columns,—the most striking part of the ruins. In this space there is a cistern sixteen feet by eighteen, hewn out of the solid rock. A double staircase leads to the terrace, the whole length of which is two hundred and twelve feet, each flight projecting considerably beyond its northern face. At each extremity, east and

* It is remarkable how slight are the marks these steps bear of being frequented; they are scarcely worn at all; and the reverse must have been the case had the place been long the resort of worshippers (if a temple), or even of the crowds which thronged the gateway of a royal residence.

† Niebuhr says thirteen, and remarks that the space is small for so splendid a fabric.

‡ Sir R. K. Porter calls them bulls. Probably they were figures of the same animal that appears in various parts of the ruins, particularly in the capital of some of the columns, and which resembles a unicorn fully as much as a bull.

west, rises a range of steps, and again, about the middle, projecting eighteen feet, are two smaller flights: the extent of the whole is eighty-six feet, including twenty of a landing-place. Like that of the great entrance, the ascent is extremely gradual, each step being fourteen inches broad by sixteen feet long, and four inches deep. The front is covered with sculptures so thickly as at first to bewilder the eye. These figures, which are disposed in groups to suit the compartments of the staircase, are variously habited and employed. Some resemble royal guards and attendants, clothed in long robes, with brogue-like buskins and fluted flat-topped caps, bearing bows and quivers, spears and shields; others are placed in long rows, and appear to represent a procession of many nations, being differently dressed and appointed. They bear gifts or offerings, and lead animals of divers sorts. There is also represented in sculpture a fight between a lion and a bull, or as some think a unicorn,—at all events, an animal like the mutilated figure at the portal. But a description of this superb display of bas-reliefs would be tedious, and scarcely intelligible without elaborate drawings.*

Sir Robert Ker Porter supposes these magnificent works of art were designed to perpetuate the memory of the grand religious procession of Cyrus the Great described by Xenophon, or probably that of Darius, at the festival of the No Ruz or vernal equinox, receiving presents from the numerous nations of his empire.

But we hasten to the more stupendous portion of these ruins,—the magnificent colonnade which occupies the terrace. And assuredly the imagination cannot picture a sight more imposing than these vast, solitary, mutilated pillars, which, founded in an age beyond the reach of tradition, have witnessed the lapses of countless generations, and seen dynasties and empires rise, flourish, and decay, while they still rear their gray heads unchanged.

From the terrace, which measures from east to west 380 feet, and from north to south 350, once rose four divisions of columns, consisting of a central group of thirty-six, flanked on either side as well as in front by two rows of six each,

* Such plates, and a minute account of every figure, may be found in the *Travels of Sir R. K. Porter*.

forming an aggregate of seventy-two* in all. Of the advanced division, the site of which is twenty feet from the landing-place, only one is standing. Between these and the first row of the centre pillars are seen large blocks of stone, supposed by Morier to have formed pedestals for figures, but which Niebuhr considers as marking the walls of a portal. About thirty-eight feet from the western edge of the terrace (which is the same as that of the principal platform) arose the double row of columns, of which five only remain erect. Of the corresponding eastern rows four only survive. Sixty feet from the eastern and western colonnades arose the central group of thirty-six columns, and in this interval are to be traced the courses of aqueducts, in some places cut in the rock.† Of these columns five alone are entire, which, with those already mentioned, form an aggregate of fifteen; still occupying their sites;‡ the rest lie prostrate in the accumulated dust of ages, and many of the pedestals are demolished or overwhelmed in rubbish.

This magnificent assemblage of columns consisted of two distinct orders,—those composing the three exterior double rows being uniform in their architecture, while the centre group, all of which are alike, differed from those surrounding them. The two orders are thus described by Sir R. K. Porter: Of the first he says, “The total height of each column is sixty feet, the circumference of the shaft sixteen feet,§ and its length from tor to capital forty-four feet. The shaft is finely fluted in fifty-two divisions: and at its lower

* This computation and plan agree with those of Niebuhr, Kempfer, and Le Brun, and of Morier more recently, and is undoubtedly correct; but Le Brun, speaking of the total number of columns on the great terrace, estimates them at 205. Sir Thomas Herbert, Theyenot, and Chardin, increase the amount of those in the grand colonnade, though it does not appear upon what grounds.

† Niebuhr mentions this, and says the terrace was paved with stones of extraordinary size.

‡ Della Valle, in	1691,	saw 25 pillars standing.
Herbert, in	1627,	19
Olearius, in	1638,	
Kempfer, in	1696,	17
Niebuhr, in	1765,	
Franklin, and all travellers down to Sir R. K. Porter,	15	
Lieut. Alexander, in 1826,	13	

§ Niebuhr computes the height of these at fifty-two feet, and of the centre ones at forty-eight.

extremity begins a cincture and a torus ; the former two inches, the latter one foot in depth. From thence devolves the pedestal, in form of the cup and leaves of a pendant lotus. It rests upon a plinth of eight inches, and measures in circumference twenty-four feet six inches ; the whole, from the cincture to the plinth, comprising a height of five feet ten inches. The capitals which remain, though much injured, suffice to show that they were also surmounted with the double demi-bull.* The heads of the bull forming the capitals take the directions of the faces of the respective fronts of the terrace ; and I think there can be no doubt that the wide hollow between the necks received a beam, meant to support and connect an entablature, over which has been placed the roof." Of the central group he remarks, "They are placed at the same distance from each other as the columns in the other divisions, and the dimensions are similar in point of circumference and in the depth of the pedestal, as also in the general particulars of the ornaments ; but they are only fifty-five feet in height. The shafts, which are fluted like the others, are about thirty-five feet in length ; the capitals are of a quite different character, being of the same description with those at the great portal. The two lower divisions are evidently constructed of the hallowed lotus ; the upper compartment has only two volutes ; the middle compartment (which is only one division of the lotus) appears to have had some extraneous body introduced into the opening between it and the lower part ; and the angular and unfinished state of that side of the capital seems to testify the same : here then the connecting line must have run, whence the roof could spring."

Immediately to the south of these groups, and elevated six or seven feet above the terrace on which they stand, is a mass of ruins of a different description, among the fragments of which may be traced abundance of the same figures which adorn the staircase. It appears to have contained at least three apartments, the doorways and window-frames of which, formed of huge blocks of highly polished marble, with numerous niches, bear various bas-reliefs ; especially one of a monarch clad in long flowing robes, with two attendants holding over him the umbrella and fly-flap ; while others

* Or unicorn.

represent combats between men and various imaginary animals. Faint remains of a double colonnade between the western face of this building and the same face of the grand terrace are still visible.

Still farther southward appear other complicated masses of ruins, among which are many vestiges of elaborate sculptures as well as of colonnades. Sir R. K. Porter saw the bases of ten columns three feet three inches in diameter, and he conjectures that the largest may have been attached to the abode of the sovereign.* The principal doorways and window-frames, of gigantic proportions and exquisite workmanship, are still in their places; but fragments of sculpture and plinths of columns scattered about in heaps of rubbish evince the power of time and weather over the most solid structures. The royal personage with his two attendants appear frequently in the bas-reliefs on the entrances, and many figures like those in other parts of the ruins also occur, together with occasional inscriptions in the arrow-headed or cuneiform character. A subterranean aqueduct, which seems to have supplied the whole series of edifices from a tank yet visible at the foot of the rocks, passes under the ruins; and in this dark labyrinth Chardin wandered long, and Morier found himself disappointed.

There are vestiges of two other edifices on the platform; one to the north of those last mentioned, and another to the south-east. These also bear bas-reliefs of the same description as those already delineated. But by far the most considerable of the structures which have occupied this area, except the Chehel Minar (as the aggregate group of columns is called), is a square of 210 feet, situated a considerable space northward from the columns. Two door-ways enter it from every side, but the grand portals are on the north. These are thirteen feet in width,—the others are only seven, and all are richly adorned with sculpture of the same characters with that already described.†

We have still to notice the tombs,—those magnificent resting-places, as they are no doubt justly deemed, of the

* Niebuhr supposes this to have been the first-built portion of all the edifices on the platform.

† Le Brun estimates the number of figures of men and animals on the whole of the ruins, including the tombs, at 1300, which Niebuhr does not think exaggerated.

ancient monarchs of Persia.* In the face of the mountain, about 500 yards eastward from the Hall of Columns, appears a niche 72 feet broad by 130 high, according to Chardin, cut in the solid rock, the face of which is divided into two compartments, each highly ornamented with sculpture. In the lower compartment, four pilasters, with capitals of the double-headed unicorn, carry upon beams an architrave, frieze, and cornice. The space between the centre pillars is occupied by a false door carved in the rock, in the lower part of which an opening has been broken, probably in search of treasure. The upper compartment exhibits, in bas-relief, a coffer (not unlike the figures of the Jewish Ark of the Covenant), terminated at either end by nondescript animals, and supported by their legs, which resemble those of griffins. A double row of fourteen figures each is sculptured on this chest. On the top, at one end, is placed a fire-altar, while opposite on an elevated stage of three steps, stands a royal figure, holding up his right hand as if in adoration, and grasping with his left a bow; above, between the king and the altar, hovers a symbolical figure, supposed to be the monarch's attendant spirit.

On entering the broken doorway a chamber is discovered, about thirty feet wide, by fifteen or sixteen deep, and ten or twelve high, at the farther end of which are three cavities, as if for bodies.† Being all empty, they have long been open to the curious, and are often used by the Eelaiouts who encamp near as magazines for corn and straw.

One of the most perplexing considerations regarding these

* The question cannot but arise here, how the princes of a people whose religion forbade interment, and whose custom was to expose the dead to gradual decay and to the fowls of the air, should have formed depositaries so elaborate. They were probably intended as crypts to contain embalmed bodies, rather than as places of sepulture. Yet even this seems contrary to the doctrine of Zerdusht, which inculcates the resolution of the body into its original elements, and their reunion at the resurrection, as fundamental tenets. We find, nevertheless, that the Sassanian kings were buried: and at Istakhar too; for Xezdijird, the last of the race, was sent from Khorasan to be laid in the sepulchre of his fathers.

† One of the tombs has but two of these cavities; they have all been covered with slabs of marble. According to Chardin, these crypts are thirty inches deep, by sixty-two long and twenty-six broad. In his time, as now, neither vault nor crypt contained anything but muddy stinking water; and he thinks, if bodies ever were deposited there, they must have been pressed in by violence, so small are their dimensions.

tombs is the great care with which their entrances have been concealed from view; for the doorway having but the semblance of a gate, there must have been some other access even to excavate the interior. Chardin thinks the subterraneous passages in which he was bewildered must have led to the sepulchres, although the communications had been closed. Yet if this be the case, it is singular that no indication of such entrances has ever been discovered within the tombs themselves.

Three quarters of a mile southward from the Tucht e Jumsheed, Nisbuhr discovered, and Morier after him visited, a tomb resembling the others, but not so much ornamented, and in less perfect preservation. The most remarkable circumstance is, that it appears to have been studiously concealed from view, and has no doorway whatever; thus confirming Chardin's opinion, that these repositories were approached only by secret passages under ground. The upper part is built of large blocks of stone; the under portion has been hewn out of the rock.

A few miles northward from the great ruins, in a spot called, from the Sassanian sculptures found there, Naksh e Roostani, are four more tombs, so closely resembling those at the Tucht as to require no particular description. They are cut in the face of a perpendicular rock, the natural scarping of which is increased by art, and elevated from thirty to forty feet from the ground, so that it is very difficult to reach them. This has been done, however, by Captain Sutherland, Sir W. Ouseley, Colonel D'Arcy, and Sir R. K. Porter, whose discoveries have only identified their age with that of those at the Tucht e Jumsheed.

A singular and substantial building of white marble near these tombs, twenty-four feet square, and about thirty feet high, attracts the attention of travellers. The ceiling is composed of two large marble slabs, and a single stone twenty-two feet long forms the cornice of the northern face. The portal, five feet six inches high, and about eleven feet from the ground, gives entrance, through a wall five feet three inches thick, into a chamber twelve feet three inches square, and about twenty high, the walls of which are blackened with smoke; the windows being closely fitted with stone. There is no sculpture on this building, but many narrow niches appear in the external walls. The natives call it the

Kaaba* of Zoroaster, and the Nokara Khaneh of Jumsheed. Morier thinks it a fire-temple; but there remains nothing to indicate its use with any degree of certainty.

There are, however, two structures formed from protuberances of rock, between five and six feet square, which appear to have been fire-altars; and in the recesses of the mountains Morier saw twenty niches of various sizes, with inscriptions different from all that he had elsewhere observed.

All the way from Naksh e Roostum to the Tucht, both the plain and the mountains exhibit tokens of the same workmanship so strikingly exhibited in these two places. Of such vestiges, that called the Tucht e Taoos (Throne of the Peacock) or the Harem of Jumsheed is the most remarkable. But it would be endless to enumerate all the indications of former prosperity which this neighbourhood affords. That there once existed on the plain of Merducht the large and populous capital of a mighty empire, is a fact which admits of no dispute. But the learned are divided regarding the name of this place; some holding it to be the Persepolis, some the Pasargadæ, of ancient historians—for the appellation Istakhar is more modern, and applies properly to a castellated mountain in the vicinity.

Sir W. Ouseley is inclined to believe that the city in the plain of Merducht was Pasargadæ, which name he proposes to read Parsagarda, and considers it as identical with Persepolis. The observation of Strabo, however, who mentions that Alexander, after having burned the palace of Persepolis, went immediately to Passargadæ; and that of Arrian, who says that the conqueror, having visited the tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadæ, returned to the palace he had burned, appear conclusive against Sir William's hypothesis. In the situation of Persepolis, Chardin at once recognises the descriptions of Arrian, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus. Sir R. K. Porter thinks the Tucht e Jumsheed was the palace set on fire by the Macedonian conqueror; it was not wholly burnt down, as Quintus Curtius would have it, but saved by his own orders from complete destruction on recovering from his intoxication, as Plutarch more reasonably mentions. In proof of this, he refers to Strabo and Arrian, who say that the Ma-

* The Kaaba or Temple of Mecca is the point to which the Faithful turn their eyes at prayer.

cedonian after his return from India inhabited the palace of Persepolis ; and we learn from the Book of Maccabees,* that Antiochus Epiphanes, 160 years afterward, attempted to pillage that city and its temple.

Persepolis and Pasargadæ are both described as situated near the Araxes or Kour Ab.† The plain of Merdush is watered by that river ; and a branch of it, named the Polwar or Ferwur, which rises in the valley of Mourghab, passes near the Tucht. If the hypothesis and reasoning of Morier and Sir R. K. Porter be well-founded, the remains of Pasargadæ are to be found in Mourghab ; and in that case Persepolis would be identified with the Tucht e Jurhsheed.

In later times, during the sway of the Arsacidæ, Istakhar, the only name by which native historians appear to have known this city, finds frequent mention in their works, although little weight can be attached to their authority. It was among the earliest conquests of Ardeshir Babegan ; Shapoor II. made it his residence ; Yezdijird I. held his court there ; and Hoormuz III., who reigned in the close of the sixth century, passed two months every year at it. In the succeeding age, however, it ceased to be a royal residence, for Khoosroo Purveez bestowed the government on one of his favourites ; and it was here that the last of the Sassanian kings lay concealed when called to the throne A. D. 632. Twelve years afterward it capitulated to the Mohammedans ; but the people having slain the foreign governor, were in consequence all put to the sword. The city was ultimately destroyed by the fanatical Arabs ; and Shiraz being founded in the vicinity became the capital of Fars. Such is a sketch of the latter days of Istakhar ; but the questions, who was its founder, and who raised the mighty fabrics of which the ruins still astonish the traveller, remain yet unanswered. If, however, the translation made by M. Saint Martin, of two cuneiform inscriptions copied by Niebuhr from these ruins, be confirmed by farther discoveries, their era may be determined, and the conjecture which assigns them to the age of Darius and Xerxes will be reduced to certainty.

Opinions have not been less divided as to the object of these edifices than regarding their date and founder. That

* 1st Maccabees, chap. vi.

† It is remarkable that this river retains the name of the celebrated founder of the empire—Cyrus ; in Persian, Kour.

the Chehel Minar, or Hall of Columns, was dedicated to some solemn and probably religious purpose seems obvious from its peculiar architecture, its unfitness for a dwelling, its singular position beneath a range of mountains, as well as from its vicinity to the cemeteries in the rock behind. It is even doubtful whether it ever had a roof. The distance between the columns, the absence of all materials among the ruins adapted to such a purpose, no less than the scantiness of the rubbish, have been adduced as reasons for concluding that it never was covered, unless occasionally by an awning ; and to this opinion Colonel Johnson, an intelligent traveller, inclines. But it has been urged with considerable plausibility on the other hand, that twenty-five feet, the distance between each column, is a space by no means too great to be connected by beams, while all such perishable materials must have long since decayed, and those of a more permanent nature may have been removed to assist in constructing modern towns and villages. Besides, the hollow between the necks of the double unicorn capitals is obviously formed, Sir R. K. Porter thinks, to receive the end of a rafter, as is seen where the same order of pillars is introduced as pilasters in the façade of the tombs. The same author observes also, that the angular and unfinished state of part of the capitals of the centre group indicates the connecting line from which the roof sprung ; and he remarked, that the interior sides of them had been injured, as if some heavy body had fallen in and grated against them, while the outward faces are generally untouched. Chardin, Kæmpfer, Niebuhr, and Sir W. Ouseley, all incline to the opinion that these columns supported some sort of covering ; and indeed it is not so difficult to comprehend how this was constructed in the case of the Chehel Minar, as in that of the other less elevated buildings on the terrace, the extended area of which must have prevented their being supplied with any simple roofing.

Another question has arisen regarding the place whence the materials of these stupendous structures were taken. But it is obvious, not only that the stone of the mountain behind is the same as that of which they are built—namely, a compact gray limestone, susceptible of a good polish,—but that there are numerous proofs of its having been used for this very purpose, as several pieces half cut from the quarries, and imperfectly finished in the style of the buildings, are

found in the vicinity,—a circumstance which has led to an opinion that the edifices on the platform were not completed at the period of their destruction.

One of the most striking considerations which arises from examining these splendid monuments, is the great mechanical skill and exquisite taste evinced in their construction, and which indicates an era of high cultivation and considerable scientific knowledge. We see here, as in Egypt, blocks of stone forty or fifty feet long, and of enormous weight, placed one above another with a precision which renders the points of union almost invisible; columns sixty feet high, consisting of huge pieces admirably formed, and jointed with invariable accuracy; and a detail of sculpture, which, if it cannot boast the exact anatomical proportions and flowing outline of the Greek models, displays at least chiselling as delicate as any work of art on the banks of the Nile.

The numerous inscriptions in letters or symbols which have hitherto baffled the research of the learned, need not detain us long. They are all in what is called, from their shape, the cuneiform or arrow-headed character, and many of them, especially those on the north wall of the terrace and on one of the tombs at Naksh e Roostum, are of great length. Chardin, Le Brun, and Niebuhr, have given specimens of those inscriptions; and the last of these authors has with great labour copied three of them. Several modern travellers, particularly Sir R. K. Porter, have added to the stock of materials in the hands of the learned. The late lamented Mr. Rich, for many years resident at Bagdad, visited Persepolis with the intention of making a perfect copy of every literary carving in that neighbourhood; and it was his intention to transmit to Professor Grotfend the result of his labours, to assist the researches of that profound Orientalist. But his untimely death, by removing from the field of Eastern inquiry one of its most zealous and successful cultivators, must, it is to be feared, have defeated this laudable object.

According to Baron St. Martin, there are several sorts of cuneiform writing, the characters of which are perfectly distinct. A number of inscriptions (forty-two, some very long) have lately been collected near the lake and city of Van, in Turkish Armenia, by Mr. Shultz, a German, sent thither for the purpose by the French minister of foreign affairs in

1826; and among these three separate cuneiform characters have been distinguished by the Baron, who conceives from their situation that they may belong to the age of Semiramis. Of these only one resembles the writing at Persepolis.

He doubts, indeed, whether any real progress has yet been made in deciphering these characters ; admitting, however, that if subsequent discoveries shall confirm the deductions of Professor Grotefend, he will be entitled to the honour of first ascertaining what Persian kings founded the edifices at Persepolis. These monarchs he holds to be Darius and Xerxes ; and this conclusion is supported by a very ingenious inference made by himself. A vase of alabaster, in the King of France's collection, bore an inscription in the Persepolitan character, by the side of which was placed a set of Egyptian hieroglyphics that had been translated by Champollion. M. St. Martin having ascertained the value of the cuneiform characters by comparison with their hieroglyphical synomymes, applied these to two inscriptions copied by Niebuhr, the meaning of which he thus conceives himself to have found out. His translation is as follows :—

FIRST INSCRIPTION.

"Darius, the powerful king ; king of kings, king of gods, son of Vyhtasp, of an illustrious race, and most excellent."

SECOND INSCRIPTION.

"Xerxes, the powerful king ; king of kings, son of Darius, of an illustrious race."

The reasoning which brought him to this conclusion is ingenious, and "it is to be hoped" (as he modestly expresses himself) "that this accidental discovery may lead us to important results when compared with the cuneiform inscriptions of Babylon, Media, and Armenia, and diffuse a new light over the history of the East." As yet, however, we have not understood that his views have either been confirmed, or followed up with that zeal which the learned author anticipated.*

* While we write, we learn that this able Orientalist is no more ; and with him vanishes much of the hopes of success in his peculiar path of research. Death has indeed been busy of late in the high places of Eastern literature,—Young, Champollion, Renouset, St. Martin. When shall we see the task which they have left incomplete resumed with such ardour and so rich a stock of talent and of learning ?

M. Silvestre de Sacy, who has so successfully employed himself upon Sassanian inscriptions, considers M. Grotefend to have made out, beyond contradiction, the names of Darius Hystaspes and Xerxes. He also agrees with Sir R. K. Porter in assigning the tombs to the era of these monarchs; and regrets that the zealous traveller did not copy the first lines of the inscription on the principal one, as it might have confirmed his own conjecture of its being the sepulchre of Darius Hystaspes. Such then is the present state of this inquiry, and so arduous, if not so hopeless, does the task of elucidating the subject appear, from the very limited materials which exist to throw light upon each other.

Before quitting the plain of Merdusht we have to notice certain remarkable castellated rocks near the ruins, which probably formed the defences of the ancient city. We allude to the hills of Istakhar, Shekusteh, and Shemgan, which, with their respective forts, are by Persian writers termed the Seh Goombedan or the Three Domes. The first of these rises nine miles north of the Tucht, and was ascended by Morier, who estimated its elevation at 1200 feet. The path at its commencement was narrow and intricate, winding up a conical hill to the height of 700 feet; but the next portion arose 500 feet nearly perpendicular, and the ascent was toilsome in the extreme. On the top, which is marked by a single fir-tree and some bushes, are four reservoirs, part of a gateway, and several broken turrets and walls,—the remains of a fortress constructed by the Arabian general Zeid. As the travellers looked down from this summit, full in front was seen another singular insulated cliff, also crowned with a fortress, and known, by the name of Kallah Shareek or the Castle of Shareek, a king or governor of the province, who was killed in defending it against the Arabs in the seventh century.

The extensive antiquities in the plains of Mourghab, forty-nine miles north-north-east of the Tucht, resemble those of Persepolis, with which they are supposed to be coeval;—an account of them has been given by Morier, and, with his accustomed accuracy, by Sir R. K. Porter. We shall, however, confine ourselves to the description of what they both consider to be the tomb of Cyrus the Great.

By the natives this building is called Musjed e Madre Solyman, the Mosque of the Mother of Solomon. "This

interesting monument," says Sir R. K. Porter, "stands on an eminence not far from the hills which bound the plain to the south-west. A wide area, marked outward by the broken shafts of twenty-four circular columns, surrounds the building. Each column is three feet three inches in diameter, and they are distant from each other fourteen feet. Seventeen of these are still erect, but heaped round with rubbish, and barbarously connected with a wall of mud. Within this area stands the tomb. The base on which it rests is composed of immense blocks of white marble rising in steps, the lowest of which forms a square of forty-four by forty feet. A succession of gigantic steps completes, in a pyramidal shape, the pedestal of the tomb. The edifice itself is twenty-one feet by sixteen feet ten inches square; in the smallest face is placed the entrance, which is two feet ten inches high. Four layers of stones compose the fabric. The first forms the sides of the entrance, the second its lintel, the third a simple projecting cornice, the fourth completes its pediment and sloping roof. The walls are a mass of solid stone five feet thick; the chamber is seven feet wide, ten long, and eight high. The floor is composed of two immense slabs joined nearly in the middle. No cuneiform inscription has been found anywhere upon the building; but the interior surface of the wall facing the kebla is sculptured with ornaments, surrounding an Arabic inscription. The roof is flat, and, together with three of the walls, blackened with smoke. The side which faces the door, together with the floor, remain white, and the only thing which Mr. Morier saw within was a few dirty manuscripts."

Tradition declares this to be the tomb of Bathsheba, and the charge of it is given to women, who suffer none but females to enter. But the Carmelite friars of Shiraz told Mandelslo that it was the sepulchre of Wallada, mother of Solymain, fourteenth caliph of the posterity of Ali. This, however, has been deemed by one intelligent author as at best a random piece of information, particularly as two Mohammedan writers of respectability quoted by Sir W. Ouseley* make no allusion to the Fatimite lady, but acquiesce in the tradition,—a circumstance which, while it in no degree confirms the latter, appears at least to discredit the story of the Carmelites.

* Ouseley's Travels, vol. ii. p. 432.

The building and its enclosure are surrounded by other ruinous structures, more obviously contemporary with Persepolis, as they bear many cuneiform inscriptions, all apparently the same ; and if Professor Grotefend's translation of these,—namely, "Cyrus the king, ruler of the universe,"—be correct, it would go far to establish the conjecture of the travellers we have followed, that here was the true Pasargadæ, and that in the Musjed we have the tomb of the grandson of Astyages.

Morier in advancing his opinion and his reasons observes, "If the position of the place had corresponded to the site of Pasargadæ as well as the form of the structure accords with the description of the tomb of Cyrus near that city, I should have been tempted to assign to the present building so illustrious an origin. The tomb was raised within a grove; it was a small edifice with an arched roof of stone, and its entrance was so narrow that the slenderest man could scarce pass through. It rested on a quadrangular base of a single stone, and contained the following inscription :—'O mortals! I am Cyrus, son of Cambyses, founder of the Persian monarchy and sovereign of Asia; grudge me not, therefore, this monument.' That the plain around Musjed e Madre Solyman was the site of a great city is proved by the ruins with which it is strewed; and that this city was of the same general antiquity as Persepolis may be inferred from the similarity of character in the inscriptions on the remains of both, though this particular edifice does not happen to display that internal evidence of a contemporaneous date. A grove would naturally have disappeared in Modern Persia; the structures correspond in size; the triangular roof might be called arched, in an age when the true semicircular arch was probably unknown; and in the lapse of 2400 years the absence of an inscription would not be a decisive evidence against its identity with the tomb of Cyrus."

According to Arrian, who wrote from the testimony of one who had visited the spot, this celebrated sepulchre was within the Royal Paradise (or garden) of Pasargadæ. Its base was a single quadrangular stone; above was a small edifice of masonry with an arched roof; within was the golden coffin of Cyrus, over which was a canopy with pillars of gold, and the whole was hung round with purple tapestry and Babylonian carpets. In the same enclosure was a small

house for the Magi, to whose care the cemetery was intrusted by Cambyses; and the charge descended from father to son. Sir R. K. Porter saw holes in the floor, and at the upper end of the chamber, in the positions that would have served to admit the iron fastenings of the coffin. Had it been cased in a stone sarcophagus, that would doubtless (he remarks) have remained. The plain in which the structure stands is now, as it was then, well watered; and in a building called the Caravansary he thinks may be recognized the residence of the Wise Men.

To these ingenious reasonings it might be objected, that the base of a single quadrangular stone, and the arched roof described by Arrian, can scarcely be identified with the pyramidal pile of large stones and pitched stone roof of the edifice in question; and that the doorway, two feet ten inches broad, cannot pass for the entrance, being so narrow as hardly to admit the slenderest man. There is, besides, as has been already mentioned, a great uncertainty with regard to the fate of Cyrus himself.

We shall not detain our readers with an account of Fassa or Darabgerd; for, although the country between Shiraz and the last-mentioned place is sprinkled with relics that might well interest the antiquary, and the name of Darabgerd is derived from one of Persia's most celebrated monarchs, nothing is found there connected with the class of antiquities we have been considering.

The plain of Kermanshah is bounded on the north by rugged mountains, which terminate in a naturally-scraped precipice 1500 feet high. A portion of the lower part, extending 150 feet in length and 100 in height, has been smoothed by art, leaving a projection above and below; the latter sloping gradually in a rocky terrace to the level of the ground at the bottom. The absence of columnar support to the overhanging projection has, it is supposed, procured for this singular rock the name of Bessitoon,—that is, "without pillars."

Above the source of a clear stream which bursts from the mountain about fifty yards from this rocky platform, are the remains of an immense piece of sculpture, but so much defaced that scarcely any outline can be traced. The mutilation chiefly arises from several subsequent additions that have been made on the same spot. One of these, a Greek

inscription, has in its turn been forced to give way to one in Arabic, the sole purport of which is a grant of certain lands to a neighbouring caravansary. Colonel Macdonald Kinneir is inclined to refer this rude sculpture to the time of Semiramis. He supports his opinion by the authority of Diodorus, who relates from Ctesias, that on the march to Ecbatana she encamped at Mount Baghistan in Media, and made there a garden twelve furlongs in compass. The mountain was dedicated to Jupiter, and towards one side it had a steep rock seventeen furlongs high. She cut a piece out of the lower part of this rock, and caused her image to be carved upon it with one hundred of her guards standing round her. She wrote, moreover, that Semiramis ascended from the plain to the top of the mountain by laying the packs and farrels of her baggage-cattle one upon another. Hamadan being generally admitted to be the ancient Ecbatana, there is better reason than is commonly to be found in similar conjectures for believing that this sculpture dates from the era of the Assyrian heroine. We can allow for the exaggeration which has converted 1500 feet into seventeen furlongs.

Considerably higher on the smoothed rock appear fourteen figures in precisely the same style as those at the Tucht e Jumsheed. A line of nine persons united by a cord tied round their necks, and having their hands bound behind their backs, approach another of more majestic stature, who, holding up his right hand with an authoritative air, treads on a prostrate body; while his countenance, grave and erect, assumes the expression of a superior or a conqueror. Of these captives the greater number appear middle-aged; but the third and the last are old men. Three wear the same flowing dress as the figure who is supposed to represent the monarch; the rest are clad in tight short tunics. Above all, in the centre, floats as it were in the air the figure so often seen at Persepolis, and which is supposed to be the guardian angel of the principal personage.

Sir R. K. Porter thinks the design of this bas-relief, which is finely executed, commemorates the final conquest of Israel by Psalmaneser, king of Assyria; and that the ten captive figures (including that which is prostrate under the king's

* A copy of this as far as can be deciphered, may be seen in Sir R. K. Porter's Travels, vol. ii. p. 151. The letters forming part of the word "Gotarz" may still be recognised.

feet) represent the ten tribes that were carried into captivity. We join cordially in the wish of this traveller that the inscriptions could be deciphered.

Our attention must now be directed to the second class of antiquities,—namely those connected with the period of the Sassanian dynasty. Of these the principal monuments are the sculptures of the Tauk e Bostam or Bostan, Naksh e Roostum, of the Naksh e Rejib, near Persepolis, and of Shapoor;—all of them less imposing than those above described. The most remarkable, though probably the least ancient, is the Tauk e Bostam or the Arch of the Garden.

The mountain in which these sculptures are executed forms part of the range which terminates at Bassittoo, and like it is bare and craggy, affording with its rugged height a striking contrast to the fertile plain of Kermanshah, over which it towers scarcely a furlong distant from the city. By the side of a clear and copious stream which gushes from its base, rises a flight of several hundred steps cut in the steep rock, and finishing abruptly on an extensive ledge. Beneath this platform is situated the largest of the two arches, which is twenty-four feet in width and twenty-one in depth; while the face of the precipice has been smoothed for a considerable space on either side, as well as above, beyond its sweep. On the lower part of this prepared surface, both to the right and left, are upright entablatures, each containing an exquisitely-carved ornament of foliage in the Grecian taste. A double-wreathed border, terminating in two fluttering streamers, which are attached to various parts of the dress of royal persons on all the Sassanian monuments, runs round the arch. The keystone is surmounted by a sort of crescent resting in the same ornament; and on either side of the arch hovers a winged female holding a clasped fillet or diadem, with the usual waving streamer. The chiselling is good, and, though inferior in elegance to that seen at Persepolis and Mourghab, the disposition of the wings and drapery is such that Sir R. K. Porter supposes them to be the work of an artist of the Romano-Grecian school. Both the inner sides and back of this arch are sculptured. The latter is divided into two compartments. In the upper are three figures, of which the one in the centre represents a monarch wearing a pointed diadem, whence rise a pair of small wings, embracing with

their points a crescent, and that again enclosing a ball or globe. His robe is rich and jewelled ; his hair floats in curls on his shoulders ; his left hand rests on a sword ; and with his right he seems to refuse a plain fillet with streamers, which is presented by the person on his left. This figure wears the same diadem as the sovereign, with some difference in its embellishments ; but his garb is not so highly ornamented, and the style of his trousers does not correspond. On the right is a female crowned with a diadem varying from the others ; she offers to the centre figure a circlet similarly decorated. The lower compartment contains a single colossal horseman clad in a coat of chain-armour. On his left arm he bears a shield ; a spear is on his right shoulder ; and a royal helmet adorned with streamers covers his head. His steed is caparisoned and richly ornamented ; but both horse and man are very much mutilated. There are traces of a Greek and of a Pehlevi inscription, both illegible. On the sides are delineated a boar and a stag-hunt in the minutest detail, and comprising innumerable figures of men and animals carved with great truth and spirit.

The second arch is but nine feet broad and twelve deep. It is plain externally, and contains on the back of the recess only two figures similarly habited, with the balloon-shaped cap, curled hair, and rich robes ; the hands resting on the pommels of long straight swords which hang down perpendicularly in front. A dagger depends at the right side of each, and the number of streamers denote both to be royal personages. Two inscriptions in Pehlevi are found one on each side these figures ; the translation of which, according to De Sacy,—the first person in modern Europe whose industry and genius enabled him to rediscover the value of the alphabetic characters, and the meaning of some legends in that language which had long been given up as irrecoverably lost,—is as follows, and identifies the sovereigns represented :

FIRST INSCRIPTION.

"This is the figure of the adorer of Ormuzd, the excellent Shapoor king of kings, of Iran and An Iran,—celestial germ of the race of gods, —son of the servant of Ormuzd, the excellent Hoormuz, king of kings, of Iran and An Iran,—celestial germ of the race of the gods, grandson of the excellent Narses, king of kings."

SECOND INSCRIPTION.

"He of whom this is the figure is the adorer of Ormuzd, the excellent Vaharam, king of kings, of Iran and An Iran,—celestial germ of the race of the gods,—son of the adorer of Ormuzd, the excellent Sapor, king of kings, of Iran and An Iran,—celestial germ of the race of the gods,—grandson of the excellent Hoormuz, king of kings."*

Sir R. K. Porter is inclined to adopt the tradition of the country, so far as regards the date of the first arch at least, and to attribute them to the reign of Khoosroo Purveez, whose amusements in this, the scene of his dalliance with the fair Shireen, are portrayed in the hunting-scenes; while he conceives that the three figures in the upper compartment represent Khoosroo with Shireen and the Emperor Maurice, his patron and father by adoption.† M. de Sacy agrees with the traveller in thinking that the two winged forms are Feroheres, perhaps a little altered by the taste of a Greek artist. If this be the case, and if that gentleman's translation be correct, the bas-relief in the second arch must be considerably older than the first, as the inscriptions would then apply to Sapor II. or Zoolactaf, and to Baharam or Vaharam his son, surnamed Kermanshah, who long filled the office of viceroy over Kerman during his brother's life, and afterward founded the city of that name.

There is another bas-relief at Taus e Bostam, cut on a smooth piece of rock over the source of the stream. It is termed the Four Calunders, and consists of three figures erect,—one of whom, clad in the ensigns of royalty, treads under foot a fourth who lies prostrate. The workmanship resembles that of the smaller arch, and no doubt refers to the same events.

In addition to the bas-reliefs, it appears certain that the rocks of Taus e Bostam were once adorned with statues; for Sir R. K. Porter discovered, leaning against the bank of the river beneath the ledge, the remains of a coarsely-hewn

* Sir John Malcolm showed this translation to Mollah Ferose, the learned Parsee already mentioned, who confirmed the accuracy of the French academician, adding that the words "Iran vo An Iran," signify "believers and unbelievers," that is, the whole world,—Persia and elsewhere.

† Sir Robert follows the Eastern tradition, that Shireen was the Roman emperor's daughter. Sir John Malcolm rejects this improbable tale.

colossal figure which had fallen from a height above ; and, on examining the spot where it had stood, a row of sculptured feet broken off at the ankles showed that other statues had once existed there. The mutilated one in question appears to have resembled the figures in the coarse bas-reliefs ; for the drapery extended to the point near the knees where it was broken off ; one hand was placed on its breast, while the other rested on something like a sword, depending in front of the body.

Poetical and popular tradition attributes the antiquities of Tausk e Bostam not only to the age of Khoosroo Purveez, but to the workmanship of an admirer of the lovely Shireen. The monarch, anxious to perpetuate the beauties of his mistress, sought for an artist able to carve her likeness in lasting stone. Ferhaud, the first sculptor of the age, presented himself for this purpose ; but, intoxicated with her charms, he madly endeavoured to gain her affections. His royal master took advantage of this infatuation, and employed him in numberless works, with a promise that his beloved should be the reward of his success. Thus inspired, the energy of Ferhaud was inexhaustible ; the sculptures of this place and Bessittoon were soon completed ; and such progress was made in cutting through the mountain to bring a stream from the neighbouring valley, that Khoosroo became alarmed lest he should be called on to perform his engagement. To avoid this dilemma he had recourse to treachery. While Ferhaud was at work on the highest part of the rock, making the echoes resound with the name of his mistress even more than with the clang of his instruments, an old woman approached him,—“ Alas ! ” said she, “ Ferhaud, why do you thus call upon the name of Shireen, when that lovely one is already no more ? Two weeks have fled and the third is now passing since that light of the world was extinguished and Khoosroo put on his robes of mourning.” Ferhaud heard and believed,—reason instantly forsook him,—seizing the aged female, he threw himself from the peak, and the betrayer and betrayed met their death in the same moment. The writers of romance relate that, hearing of her lover’s fate, Shireen pined, and, “ like the rose deserted by the nightingale, drooped her head and withered ; ” when the sovereign, struck with compunction, made what reparation was in his power, by permitting the lovers to rest in one grave,—out of

which two rose-trees grew and twined together, while a huge thistle sprung from the breast of their destroyer.—History, however, describes this celebrated lady as faithful to her husband through danger and misfortune, even to death. When he fell by a parricidal command, and when his son declared to the queen his incestuous passion, she desired, as the price of her consent, to take a last look of her murdered lord, and poisoned, or as some say stabbed, herself on the body.

The next Sassanian monuments of importance are the sculptures at Shapoor. Fifteen miles north of Kauzeroun are the ruins of that city, once the capital of Persia, founded by the monarch whose name it bears, and situated in a well-watered plain at the mouth of a narrow pass, from which issues a fine river. According to Morier it covered a space of about six miles in circumference. At the entrance of the valley, which is scarcely thirty yards across,* stands an insulated hill that exhibits portions of the walls and towers of its ancient fortifications. A pleasing, though lonely, pastoral landscape, shut in by lofty mountains, appears through the rocky gorge of the valley; and on the cliffs are carved the sculptures now to be shortly described.

The first object which arrests the attention on the southern side of the river is a much-mutilated bas-relief, carved on the surface of the rock, consisting of two colossal horsemen,—one of whom, on the right, stands over a prostrate figure that seems to be in the Roman costume. Another person, in the same dress, is in an attitude of supplication at the horse's knees; and a head, in alt-relief, is seen just between its hinder feet. The equestrian figure to the left is least destroyed; and the height of each is about fifteen feet.

The second sculpture, which is far more perfect, appears on a tablet divided into three compartments; the central one contains a mounted personage wearing a mural crown, above which is a globe or balloon-shaped ornament, common to the Sassanian sovereigns. His hair falls in massy curls on each shoulder, and riband-like streamers flow backward. He is clothed in a loose robe, a quiver hangs by his side, and in his right hand he holds a figure behind him, dressed in the Roman

* So says Morier. Colonel Johnson makes it 200; their estimate may refer to different points, but truth undoubtedly lies between.

tunic and helmet. A suppliant, in a similar habit, is on its knees before the horse's head, with its hands extended, and a face expressive of entreaty. A person in the same attire is stretched under the horse's feet; while another, with something of an Egyptian countenance, stands, in a beseeching attitude, to the right of this compartment. There is also a figure partly concealed by the one that is kneeling. Above the animal's head hovers a winged boy bearing a scroll. The right-hand section is subdivided into six others, each containing three figures, partly in supplicating attitudes; while that on the left bears two rows of five horsemen each, separated by a plain cross band. The principal group is about twelve feet in length, the minor ones four feet ten inches.

On the opposite side of the river are a still greater number of tablets. The first is eleven yards four inches long, and contains a multitude of figures very elaborately designed, and representing, as it appears, the triumph of a Persian king over a Roman army. On the left of this bas-relief is a slab containing two colossal horsemen, each grasping with his extended hand a circle, to which the royal streamers are attached. The sculpture displays much anatomical skill, even to the veins and arteries of the horse's legs. A very extensive group next occurs; but its lower parts have been so destroyed, that only the heads of men, camels, and horses are seen, with part of a mounted personage, who holds in his hand a bow and arrows. The last is a bas-relief in excellent preservation, fourteen yards long, and composed of a great variety of figures and characters. It is divided into a number of compartments, of which the one in the centre is appropriated to a design almost entirely resembling that described in the second piece.

There is little doubt that these labours of the chisel commemorate the triumph of Shapor over Valerian; although De Sacy thinks they represent the successes of Ardeshir Babegan over Artabanes, the last of the Arsacide. But of all Sassanian monuments those at Shapor have been the least explored, principally on account of the danger to be apprehended from the Mahmoud Sunni robbers, by whom the neighbourhood is infested.

The most remarkable object is a statue, now mutilated and prostrate, in a cavern a short distance up the Shapor valley. The mountain rises first in a steep slope, crowned

by a perpendicular precipice of limestone 700 feet in height.* The ascent is laborious, occupying forty minutes without a halt ; and the entrance to the cave is raised about 140 feet above the base of the precipice, the lower third being almost perpendicular. Arrived at this point, the traveller reaches a spacious archway 150 feet broad and nearly 40 high, within which, about sixteen or eighteen paces from the mouth, in a sort of natural antechamber, stands the pedestal, resting against which lies the statue with the head downwards. Both have been cut from a pillar of solid rock. The figure, which, when erect, must have been from fifteen to twenty feet high, represents the same royal personage who appears in all the Sassanian sculptures of Fars. Its head, though now defaced, has been crowned with the mural diadem ; the bushy and curled hair hangs over the shoulders ; a collar of pearls encircles the neck ; the body is covered with a thin robe, gathered in plaits at the girdle, and flowing in free folds on the thighs ; one belt crosses from the right shoulder to the left hip, another from the right hip to the left thigh, and is tied with a riband terminating in the royal streamers ; the same ornaments depend from the head, and are attached to the shoe-ties ; the right hand rests on the side, and the left appears to have grasped the pommel of the sword. The sculpture resembles exactly that of the tablets,—tolerably executed, and exhibiting some knowledge of anatomy and design, yet not so beautifully chiselled as the bas-reliefs at Persepolis. There is little doubt that the statue represents Shapoor ; and we have dwelt somewhat long on its description, because, with the exception of the mutilated remains at Taur e Bostam, it is supposed to be the only thing of the kind in Persia.†

The extent of the cavern is enormous ; its communications infinite ; while multitudes of stalactites, in all their fanciful forms, diversify the chambers, some of which are wonderfully lofty and spacious. Proceeding in the dark, or by the red light of torches, the eye is caught by dim fantastic shapes, to which the flickering gleam lends a dubious semblance of

* Lieutenant Alexander calls the mountain 1000 feet high, and the precipice 400 only. There is nothing more fallacious than judging of elevations by the eye.

† It has been said that there was a statue of Shapoor at Nishapur ; if so, no trace of it remains.

life; and gigantic forms seem to animate the abyss, as if ready to seize and punish the intruder. Colonel Johnson penetrated 190 feet to an immense circular and vaulted room 100 feet high, from which branched several passages, in one of which he observed an empty tank, twenty feet by ten, and six feet deep.. Two hundred feet more brought him to a large irregular excavation, surrounded by grotesque stalactites ; beyond this were other vaults and entrances, some containing mud and water, intensely cold ; and he was forced to retire, after spending a considerable time there, convinced that he had not penetrated half through these extensive vaults.* Such fissures are common in formations of secondary limestone ; nor is there the smallest reason for believing, with some travellers, that art has been employed to assist the processes of nature. Traces of tablets may be seen near the entrance, with the marks of the chisel visible on the hard rock ; but neither sculpture nor characters of any sort are to be found in the cave.

To this sketch of the antiquities of Shapoor we shall only add, that the city, founded according to tradition by Tah-muras Deeverbund, and destroyed by Alexander the Great, was rebuilt by the king whose name it bears, who made it his capital. The situation in a well-watered plain enabled him to render it an enchanting abode, according to the taste of the times : it abounded in gardens and baths, in fruits and flowers of hot as well as of cold climates,—for the contiguous valleys ripen oranges and dates as well as harder productions,—and in all the necessaries and luxuries of Asiatic life. And it is strange that a spot so favoured by nature should ever have been deserted for the comparatively arid plain where Kauzeroun now stands.

We must return once more to the vicinity of Persepolis,—to the tombs of the kings, where the sculptures, by the natives called Naksh e Roostum, are to be found ; and to a recess between that point and the Tucht, named by them Naksh e Rejib. These shall not detain us long ; for all Sas-

* The present writer can add his testimony to Colonel Johnson's account of this remarkable cavern and its interesting tenant. The ramifications are so extensive, that no one has ever been known to explore them, and the natives have a story that a cow, having wandered in, did not make her appearance until two years after, when she came out accompanied by two calves.

anian monuments so closely resemble each other, that the description of a few may serve for all.

On six tablets, cut on the perpendicular rocks that contain the tombs, have been sculptured many bas-reliefs, all undoubtedly Sassanian, and generally representing the triumphs or victories of the early kings of that race. The most northern exhibits two horsemen,—one of whom, with the mural crown, surmounted with a ball from which floats the royal streamer, tenders the circlet with its ribands to another whose head is covered with a round helmet, also surmounted with the balloon-shaped crest. This design, as well as a similar one at Shapor, has been supposed to represent Ardeshir Babegan, the first of the Sassanides, resigning the emblem of empire to his son. Next to this is a bas-relief with nine figures, five on the right and three on the left of a personage adorned with the ensigns of royalty,—the figures on the right seem beckoning to those on the left. Towards the centre of the range of rocks is a spirited representation of two horsemen meeting in the shock of an engagement. One of the steeds has been thrown on its haunches by the collision, and the spear of the rider is broken, while that of his adversary passes through his neck. The fourth is an exact copy, on a gigantic scale, of the subject at Shapor; in which the mounted king is supposed to be receiving the submission of a Roman emperor, who kneels before him. On the horse's belly is a long Greek inscription, for the most part illegible, and one in Pehlevi, which has been thus rendered by De Sacy:—“The figure of the servant of Ormuzd, of the divine (or god) Ardeesir, king of kings of Iran and An Iran,—of the race of the gods,—son of the god Babec, a king.”—The fifth tablet contains three figures; that in the centre wears the globe-surmounted crown, and his right hand extended holds a ring, which is also grasped by a female on his left. The third appears to be an attendant. The sixth and last is a colossal representation of two horsemen rushing on to combat; and though the one on the left wears on his head a ball with streamers instead of a three-peaked cap, it might seem as if the design was to exhibit the two warriors above described preparing for the mortal shock. This tablet is twenty-four feet long by twelve high, but is much mutilated.

The sculptures at Naksh e Rejib vary somewhat from those already delineated. They consist of three tablets,

The first contains seven colossal and two diminutive figures. The subject is that of two persons with clubs in their hands, each holding the riband circlet; but they are on foot, and their costume differs from that of the other bas-reliefs. Behind the chief, on the right, stand two women, with their faces averted, and one of them raising her finger with an impressive gesture. The other has also two attendants, one of whom holds the fly-flap over his head: the whole of this tablet has been greatly injured.

The second piece, which is much better preserved, exhibits a royal personage on horseback, followed by nine attendants, wearing high caps, with bushy beards and hair. From the elaborate details of dress and equipage, it appears to have been designed to represent the king in his greatest pomp; but the face of the horse and its rider are both totally destroyed. On the chest of the animal is a Greek inscription, which has been copied by most travellers, but is not intelligible without filling up considerable blanks at hazard. This has been done by M. de Sacy; and it is satisfactory that the Greek inscription thus supplied agrees with his translation of the Pehlevi beside it. It runs as follows:—"This is the resemblance of the servant of Ormuzd, the divine Shapor, king of the kings of Iran and An Iran,—of the race of the gods,—son of the servant of Ormuzd, the divine Artaxares, king of the kings of Iran,—of the race of the gods,—grandson of the divine Babec the king." The remaining tablet contains but a repetition of the two horsemen holding a ring.

We shall describe no more of these monuments, although several exist in various parts of the kingdom; and possibly some may have escaped the inquiries of travellers. There is, as we have already remarked, a sculptured rock at Selmas, on the north-west shore of the lake of Urumeah; and another, Naksh e Roostum, at Darab, in which Shapor is represented laying his hand with a compassionate air on the head of a captive chief. In the neighbourhood of that place there are some remains resembling druidical erections, described by Sir W. Ouseley, who also mentions an imperfect equestrian figure of Shapor, or some of the Sassanian princes, at Rhé; but for the particulars of these we must refer to the works of the various authors already quoted.

CHAPTER VI.

History from the Fall of the Sassanides to the Rise of the Suffavean Dynasty.

Completion of the Mohammedan Conquest—Jacob ibn Leith—Amer—
Dynasty of the Samanides—Of the Dilemites—The Ghiznevides—The
House of Seljuk—Togru—Alp Arslan—Malek Shah, and Nizam ul
Mulk—Sanjar—The Attabegs—Account of Hussun Subah and the
Assassins—Invasion and Conquest of Zingis Khan—Hootaku and his
Successors—Timur—His History—Conquests—Death—Successors.

We resume our historical sketch at an important juncture. Without king or government, the feeble and luxurious Persians opposed no effectual resistance to the hardy enthusiasts of Arabia, who quickly overran the empire, from the Euphrates to the Oxus, destroying with bigot fury all that was useful, grand, or sacred, in that unhappy country. The progress of those conquerors was indeed most rapid and wonderful. Colonies from the burning deserts of the south were extended over the cold countries of Khorasan and Balkh; and they flourished in the soil to which they were transplanted. The invaders soon completed the subjugation of the kingdom, which continued a province of the caliphs for more than two centuries. But the natives could not for ever endure such thraldom. Weary of wars, insurrections, and massacres, the body of the people might enjoy for a while the tranquillity of their chains; but the chieftains gradually recovered their power, and, as the fever of religious zeal abated, respect for the Lords of the Faithful declined. Disaffection first, and afterward revolt, arose, and the sceptre, which the weak successors of Omar and Ali could no longer retain, became a prize for the first adventurer who had courage to grasp it.

Jacob ibn Leith, the son of a pewterer in Seistan, accomplished this bold attempt. Too prodigal to be content with the gains of trade, the spendthrift became a robber. In the disturbed state of the country, the transition from a bandit

to a successful and gallant chief was easy. The usurping governor of his native province solicited his aid, and he availed himself of the confidence reposed in him to seize at once the person of his ally and the authority he had assumed. Supported at the outset by the Commander of the Moslem, who gladly enlisted him against his rebellious tributaries, Jacob again betrayed his trust; and making himself master of the greater part of Eastern Persia, spurned the offer of investiture wrung from the fears of his imbecile employer:—"Tell the caliph," said he to the envoy of that prince, whom he received in bed while labouring under the influence of a fever,—"tell the caliph that I am already indebted to my sword for the territories he so generously bestows upon me. If I live, that sword shall decide between us,—if I die, he will be freed from his apprehensions. If I am worsted, the man who can live on fare like this," pointing to some black bread and onions beside him, "need not fear what the chances of war can bring."

Jacob died in 877, the first independent monarch of Persia of the Mohammedan faith, bequeathing a sceptre, which required a firmer grasp, to his brother Amer, who was religious and generous, but devoted to luxury. Far from pursuing hostilities against the court of Bagdad, he sent thither a respectful letter, consenting to do homage for his dominions. But this loyalty did not continue long,—disagreements and wars arose, and the Caliph Motamed, unable to reduce the rebel, instigated Ishmael Samani, a chief of Transoxiana (Mavar al Nahar) to attack him. Valour or accident, or both, favoured the enterprise; the army of Amer was dispersed, himself taken prisoner, and sent in chains to the capital, where, after a confinement of some years, he was put to death by the Caliph Motaded (A. D. 901). It is told of this prince, that as he sat a captive on the ground after the battle, while a soldier prepared for him a coarse meal, by boiling some flesh in a small pot, a hungry dog thrust his head into the vessel, and not being able to extricate it, ran away with the mess as well as the cooking utensil. The unfortunate monarch burst into a fit of laughter. "What on earth can possibly induce a man in your situation to laugh?" said one of his guards. "See!" replied Amer, "it was but this morning that the steward of my household complained that three hundred camels were insufficient to carry my

kitchen-furniture, and now that dog scampers off with furniture, provisions, and all!"

With Amer fell the fortunes of his race ; and although two more princes belonging to it maintained a precarious authority, the empire of Persia was, during the next century, divided between the families of Saman and Dilemee. The first reigned over Transoxiana, Khorasan, Balkh, and Seistan ; the latter, though styling themselves Slaves of the Lord of the Faithful, exercised all the functions of sovereign power in great part of Irak, Fars, Kerman, Kuzistan and Laristan.

Of the first-mentioned dynasty Ismael was the most celebrated. His grandfather Saman was a Tartar chief, who claimed descent from Baharam Choubeen the Sassanian. By favour of the Caliph Mamoun his grandsons rose to distinction in Khorasan and Mavar al Nahar ; and Ismael attained a degree of influence which enabled him to discomfit the forces of Amer ibn Leith. This success confirmed his power. He extended his conquests both to east and west, and died in 907 at the age of sixty, leaving a high reputation for munificence as a patron of learning, for fidelity to his word, and for courage, justice, and piety, surpassed by few Eastern monarchs.

In the reign of Ameer Noah, fifth monarch from Ismael, the celebrated Mahmoud of Ghizni rose into notice. His father, Subuktagi, was a slave, or rather a confidential soldier of the body-guard to Abistagi, a noble of Bokhara, who renounced his country and allegiance, and with a few followers founded the principality just named. The servant succeeded his master, enlarged his dominions, and established one of the most powerful dynasties that Asia ever witnessed.

Ameer Noah, hard pressed by his nobles, applied for aid to Subuktagi, who sent his son with an army to his assistance. By the valour and conduct of these auxiliaries the rebels were routed ; and the young prince obtained as a reward the government of Khorasan. Such was the outset of the great Mahmoud of Ghizni in Persia,—such the commencement of an empire which in a few years stretched from Bagdad to Cashgar—from Georgia to Bengal. But before adverting further to these conquests, it will be proper to bestow a glance on the dynasty of the Dilemee.

Abu Shujah Buiyah, a fisherman of Dilem in Mazunderan, had three sons, to each of whom, in turn, an astrologer had promised the sovereign power. The troubles of the times, their own ambition, and probably a superstitious belief in the prediction, produced its fulfilment ; the young men rose rapidly in the service of a chief or prince of Tabaristan ; and in a short time we find Ali, the eldest, in possession of Fars and Irak Adjemi. The capture of the treasures of Yakoot, the caliph's lieutenant in Ispahan, placed riches and additional power in his hands. Kerman and Kuzistan were subdued, and Bagdad itself was numbered among his conquests, although prudence induced him to accept from the hands of the Mohammedan ruler the investiture of the dominions he had acquired, rather than to endanger his authority by offending the religious prejudices of the age.

Ali Shujah, dying childless, was succeeded by Ruken u Dowlut Hussun Buiyah, his brother ; but the sovereignty of Fars was bestowed on Ezzed u Dowlut, the son of Ruken, by his uncle Moez u Dowlut Achmed, the third of the fisherman's sons, who had remained at Bagdad nominally as assistant to the caliph, but in fact as his master. On the death of Ruken and Moez, Ezzed not only obtained all the dominions of the family, but rose to the rank of vizier,—an office which he discharged for thirty-four years with so much ability that his name was regarded with the highest gratitude; and the ruler of the Faithful himself read prayers at his funeral. Ezzed was the greatest of the monarchs of Dilem, who, however, soon sank under the overwhelming power of Mahmoud of Ghizni.

A minute account of the actions of the latter prince is rendered unnecessary by the notice already taken of his reign in another volume of this Library.* His ambition, no less than his religious zeal, led him to make several inroads into India : all of them were successful ; and by the plunder obtained he was enabled to establish his court on a footing of remarkable splendour. His name holds a conspicuous rank among those conquerors who have made sacred motives the pretext for rapine and bloodshed. His justice and piety are the theme of all historians ; but these virtues were tarnished

* See Family Library, No. XLVII. Historical and Descriptive Account of British India, vol. i.

by intolerance and avarice, which involved him in many acts unworthy of his name. He expired (A. D. 1032) in the Palace of Felicity at Ghizni, and with him sank the glory of his family. His heir Musaood was defeated ten years after by the Seljuk Turkomans, in Khorasan; and at a somewhat later period, during a mutiny of his army, he was taken prisoner and murdered by the son of his brother Mohammed, whom he had deprived of sight. In the succeeding reign of Madood, the whole of their Persian dominions were wrested from the house of Ghizni by the same invaders.

The Turkomans, who had emigrated or been driven from the steppes of Kipchauk to the plains of Bokhara, gave existence to a dynasty as powerful as any that had yet sat on the throne of Persia. Settled in Khorasan, their numbers increased so much in the reign of Mahmoud as to create in the mind of that monarch many alarming anticipations. "How many of your tribe might I rely on to assist me in case of need?" demanded he one day of their ambassador, Israel, the son of Seljuk, as he stood in the presence armed with bow and quiver, according to the custom of his people. "Send this arrow to my tribe," answered Israel, laying one shaft at the king's feet, "and 50,000 horse will attend the summons"—"Is that all your force?" inquired the sultan. "Send this," replied the chief, presenting another, "and a like number will follow."—"But were I in extreme distress," continued Mahmoud, "and required your utmost exertions?"—"Then send my bow," said Israel, "and 200,000 horse will obey the signal." The proud conqueror trembled, and foresaw the future overthrow of his empire.

In the year 1042, Togrul Beg, chief of the tribe of Seljuk, having made himself master of Khorasan, assumed the state of a sovereign at Nishapour; and in less than twenty years all Persia was overrun. Bagdad was taken, and the commander of the Faithful fell into the hands of the leader of this horde. Impressed, however, with a suitable awe for the sacred presence of the caliph, Togrul approached him reverently; and being received with the honour extorted by fear, was constituted the temporal lieutenant of the Eastern and Western divisions of the empire. The alliance was moreover cemented by a treaty for a double matrimonial union.

Alp Arslan, his son and heir, was a king whom chivalry

would have owned as a worthy son. Just, generous, and brave, his faults were only those of his age and his religion,—his virtues were his own. "The name of Alp Arslan, the valiant lion," observes Gibbon, "is expressive of the popular idea of the perfection of man; and the successor of Togtul displayed the fierceness and generosity of the royal animal." His behaviour to Romanus Diogenes, who invaded his dominions and insolently threatened him with extermination, displayed a magnanimity which might serve as a lesson to more civilized ages. Raising the discomfited emperor from the ground, he clasped his hand in token that his honour and life should be inviolate, and reprobated the baseness of those who had deserted so brave a leader in the hour of danger. After entertaining him royally for eight days, in a conference which followed, he asked his captive, what his conduct would have been had the fortune of the day been otherwise, and their situations reversed? "I would have given thee many a stripe!" answered Romanus. The Persian monarch smiled. "And what treatment canst thou then expect from me?" demanded he. "If thou art a butcher," rejoined Romanus, "thou wilt put me to death; if vainglorious, thou mayest drag me at thy chariot-wheels as a slave; if generous and prudent, grant me my liberty and accept a ransom." A ransom was agreed upon; but the throne of Romanus having been usurped, he was unable to fulfil his engagement. He sent, however, during his absence, what money he could command; and the Eastern prince was actually preparing an expedition to reinstate him, when he heard of his murder.

The death of Alp Arslan was as characteristic as his life. Yussuff, a rebellious chieftain of Kharism, had provoked him by obstinately defending a petty fortress; and, being brought to his presence, still farther exasperated him by certain bold speeches. The monarch reproached him bitterly, and ordered him to be cruelly put to death. With the strength of indignation and despair Yussuff shook off his guards, and drawing his dagger darted towards the throne. The soldiers rushed forward; but their master, an unerring archer, seized his bow, and commanded them to keep aloof. The royal arrow for the first time missed its mark; and before another could be drawn the knife of the rebel was plunged in his antagonist's breast. "Alas!" said Arslan, as he was borne into another tent to die, "I now learn from experience the

truth of those lessons I once received from a reverend sage. He told me never to despise the meanest foe ; to be humble in the sight of God ; and, especially, never to presume on my own personal skill, prowess, or abilities. I have neglected his counsel, and behold the consequence ! Yesterday, as I viewed my army from a height, I thought within myself, can anything withstand my power ? To-day, confiding in my own address, I receive my death from the hand of the enemy I despised. Alas ! what is the force of man or the power of kings when opposed to the decree of destiny ! " This great and noble-minded monarch was buried at Meru in Khorasan.*

His son, the celebrated Malek Shah, ascended the throne, and it is rarely that two such monarchs follow each other in an Asiatic dynasty. The warrior is seldom succeeded by the wise and virtuous statesman ; and still more rarely is either blest with such a minister as Nizam ul Mulk, who directed the councils of both these sovereigns. As a conqueror Malek ranks high ; he reduced Syria, Egypt, and Georgia, on the west ; Bokhara, Samarcand, and Karism, on the east. The Prince of Cashgar struck money in his name ; the wild tribes beyond the Jaxartes paid him tribute ; and, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the wall of China, prince, potentate, and khan did him homage. The prayers of multitudes ascended with the breath of morning from the mosques of Jerusalem, of Mecca, of Medina, of Bagdad, Ispahan, Bokhara, Samarcand, Ourgunge, Rhé, and Cashgar, to invoke blessings on his head. When he crossed the Oxus into Mavar al Nahar, the boatmen who transported the troops complained that they had received an order for payment on the revenues of Antioch. " The sultan," says Gibbon, " frowned at this preposterous choice ; but he smiled at the artful flattery of his minister : ' It was not to postpone their reward that I selected these remote places,—but to leave a testimonial to posterity that, under your reign, Antioch and the Oxus were subject to the same sovereign.' " The dissatisfaction of the ferrymen ceased when they found the order on Syria negotiable without loss in the camp of the monarch in Transoxiana.

The preservation of tranquillity throughout these wide realms, and the happiness of his people, were as much the

* See Family Library, No. XLVII. Historical and Descriptive Account of British India.

object of Malek's ambition as extension of dominion; and twelve times he passed through his vast territories with this beneficent intention. Passionately fond of the chase, his hunting-train consisted of 47,000 horsemen; but he scrupulously forbade acts of oppression; and a piece of gold, given to the poor for each head of game, might be intended as a compensation for the mischief occasioned by the royal amusements. Nor was his greatness of mind less conspicuous. "From the long annals of civil war," says Gibbon, "it would not be easy to extract a sentiment more pure and magnanimous, than is contained in a saying of the Turkish prince. On the eve of a battle (with his brother Fourtouch for the throne) he performed his devotions at the tomb of Imam Reza: as the Sultan rose from the ground, he asked his vizier, who had knelt beside him, what had been the object of his secret petition? 'That your arms may be crowned with victory,' was the prudent, and probably the sincere reply of the minister. 'And I,' said the generous Malek, 'implored the Lord of Hosts, that he would take from me my life and crown, if my brother be more worthy than myself to reign over the Moslems.'"

But the best of mortals is not free from imperfection, and there is a stain on the memory of this mighty king, which all his glory cannot efface. He listened to the enemies of the virtuous Nizam ul Mulk. Certain expressions of irritation, called forth by an unmerited insult, were exaggerated to his majesty, who, already prejudiced against his faithful servant, sent to demand the instant resignation of his cap and inkhorn of office. "Take them," replied the indignant minister to the royal messenger; "but the king will soon discover that my cap and inkhorn are by divine decree connected with his crown and throne. When the sea was troubled Malek Shah honoured me with his confidence: he does well now to withdraw it from me, when he enjoys a tranquillity that was purchased by my exertions in his service." The sultan thought more of these few hasty words than of his zeal and faithfulness. The vizier's disgrace was confirmed; and he did not long survive; for following the royal camp towards Bagdad, he was stabbed by an assassin hired by his successor.

Malek Shah soon followed to the grave his ill-requited minister. During a negotiation with the Caliph Moktadi, for

the removal of that prince and his court from Bagdad, which the sultan wished to make his own capital, he was seized with an illness, and died in the thirty-eighth year of his age, leaving a name second to none in Oriental history for magnificence and integrity. Persia flourished during his reign : agriculture was promoted ; canals and watercourses were constructed ; mosques, colleges, and caravansaries were built ; learned men were liberally encouraged ; and the Jel-lalean era, calculated by an assembly of sage astronomers, remains a splendid proof of the attention which he paid to science.

A period of nearly thirty years spent in war between the sons of Malek was at length terminated by the elevation of Sanjar, third of the four brothers, to the throne. From the death of his father this prince had established an independent kingdom in Khorasan and Mavar al Nahar, whence he overran the territories of Ghizni, and by degrees extended his power over the greater part of the Persian empire ; but at length, in an expedition against the Turkomans of Guz, he was taken prisoner, and detained four years in close captivity. During this time his dominions were ably governed by his sultana Toorkan Khatoon, after whose death he made his escape. But the desolate condition of that extensive portion of his empire which had been ravaged by the barbarous tribe of Guz, smote the aged monarch with a melancholy from which he never recovered, and he died in 1175, at the age of seventy-three, leaving a high reputation for humanity, justice, valour, and magnanimity.

Sanjar was the last prince of the house of Seljuk who enjoyed any large share of prosperity. Togrul III., with whose reign terminated the Persian branch, was slain by the monarch of Kharism, as he rushed intoxicated into the field of battle. But the tribe itself spread over all Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt ; and the dynasties of Iconium and of Aleppo are well known in the history of Western Asia.

For more than a century,—that is from the decline of the Seljukian dynasty until the conquest of Persia by Hoolaku Khan, the grandson of Zingis,—the greater part of that country was distracted by the contest of a class of petty princes calling themselves Attabegs,* who arose from the

* Attabeg is a Turkish designation, compounded of the words Atta, master or tutor, and Beg, lord ; i. e. governor of a lord or prince.

decay of the falling empire, and usurped its fairest provinces. The events of such a period could convey neither instruction nor amusement ; though there is one family belonging to this era which claims some attention.

Hussun Subah, well known in after times in the East as Shiek ul Gebel, and by Europeans as the Old Man of the Mountain, or King of the Assassins, was the son of an Arab of the race of Subah the Homerite, and college-companion of the celebrated Nizam ul Mulk, and of the poet Omar Keyomee, at Nishapur. Gloomy and reserved by nature, his studies assumed their complexion from his mind, and he became a morose and moody visionary. A prediction, the offspring doubtless of his mystical pursuits, implying that an exalted destiny awaited certain students in their seminary, gave rise to a mutual agreement, that whosoever of the three friends first attained to power should assist the fortunes of the two who were less successful. The sun of prosperity smiled soonest on Nizam ul Mulk, and Omar Keyomee was not long in preferring his claim to the benefit of their compact. "In what can I best assist thee?" demanded the minister, as he warmly greeted his friend. "Place me," said Omar, enamoured of poetry and ease, "where my life may pass without care or annoyance, and where wine in abundance may inspire my muse." A pension was accordingly assigned to him on the fertile district of Nishapur, where Omar lived and died. His tomb still exists ; and the writer of these pages heard the story told over the grave by a brother rhymster, and a most congenial spirit.

Hussun was much more ambitious. After years of travel he also repaired to court, and reminded the vizier of their agreement. But the establishment to which Nizam ul Mulk appointed him was spurned by the ungrateful Arab, who, failing in an attempt to undermine his benefactor in the favour of Aip Arslan, retired, in a transport of shame and fury, the implacable foe of the man who had endeavoured to serve him. Concealed in the house of a respectable landholder at Rhé, where his sanguine spirit often vented itself in threats of visionary projects, an unguarded boast, "that with the aid of two devoted friends he would overthrow the power of that Toork (Malek Shah), so alarmed his simple host, that he believed the head of his guest to be turned,

and attempted secretly to regulate his diet, and to induce him to take physic suited to persons labouring under mental derangement. Hussun smiled at the mistake : and many years after, when his power was established at Roodbar, he spirited away the good old raiis to his castle of Allahamowt, and having treated him with all kindness and courtesy, addressed him in such terms as these,—“ Well, my good friend, do you still deem me insane ? Have you brought any more medicine for me ?—or do you now comprehend the power of a few determined and united men ?”

We shall not follow this singular zealot through the various steps of that career in which, after becoming a convert to the doctrines of the Ismaelians,* he employed all his energy in working on the enthusiasm of others, and attaching to himself a band of devoted adherents, in order to secure the power he coveted. Shut out by his saturnine disposition, his profligate and dangerous character, and his peculiar opinions, from all ordinary paths to distinction, he assuaged his thirst of dominion, as well as his hatred of the species, by entralling the souls of men, and establishing a moral despotism more absolute and terrible than that of the mightiest monarchs of his time. Superstition, or a blind devoted faith, was the instrument with which he wrought ; and such was the influence he acquired, that the greatest princes trembled at his name.

The united voice of Asia called on Sultan Sanjar to root out this detestable sect from his empire : but a warning note, pinned by a dagger to his pillow, struck a degree of terror into the heart of that undaunted warrior, which no danger in the field could have inspired, and he desisted from the enterprise. Caliphs, princes, and nobles fell victims to the secret arms of the Ismaelians ; the imams and mollahs who preached against such murderous deeds and doctrines were poniarded, pensioned, or silenced ; and for some years the followers of the Sheik ul Gebel increased in number and in insolence. But the power of these banded ruffians, deriving

* The Ismaelians derive their appellation from advocating the pretensions of Ismael, son of Jaffier, sixth imam, to the pontificate, instead of his younger brother Kauzim. They also profess certain doctrines abhorrent to orthodox Islamism, and are in fact the remains of the ancient Karmathians who disturbed the faith in the reign of Haroun al Raschid, and who have been known under various other mystical designations.

its very essence from the mind that created it, could not long survive its founder. The system, it is true, maintained itself for some time after the death of Hussuni, and of his son Keah Büzoorg Omeid, who was also a chief of great energy. But it was rather by the impulse it had received from their leaders than its own inherent strength; and, in 1256, the iniquitous fabrie crumbled finally into ruins before the breath of Hoolaku, after having endured for more than one hundred and seventy years, a disgrace and a terror to Asia.

The condition of Persia, after the extinction of the Seljucides, was such as could not long continue. It was one of those junctures which invariably call forth some giant spirit to "ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm;" though scarcely could human foresight anticipate the nature of the tempest which came, not to clear the political atmosphere, but to desolate the land.

It falls not within our province to describe the progress of that dreadful power which, wielded by the ruthless Zingis, burst like a thunder cloud over Asia, deluging it with blood, and covering it with ruins; nor tell how the son of a petty khan, after struggling for more than thirty years with incredible difficulties, became the chief of many tribes,—the leader of almost countless armies,—the destroyer of millions of his fellow-creatures, and conqueror of more than half the world. Never did the Almighty in his wrath send forth so fearful a scourge—never was human life so lavishly expended! His progress was as rapid as that of the destroying angel; but it was not until the latter years that the rash defiance of Mohammed, sultan of Kharism, turned the tide of destruction westward. It was then that 700,000 Mogul soldiers swept over the rich valley of the Sogd, taking, burning, and razing, in their course, the cities of Bokhara, Samarcand, Khojend, Otrar, Ourgunge, Meru, Balkh, and many others,—that Khorasan was ravaged, its towns pillaged, and its people barbarously massacred,—that Nishapour was levelled with the earth, paying the forfeit of unseasonable loyalty with the blood of the whole inhabitants,*

* So complete we are told, was the destruction of the city, that a horse could gallop over its site without stumbling; and the aggregate of slaughter, including the people of the neighbouring districts who took refuge within its walls, and most of whom were killed in cold blood,

—that the provinces of Persia, from the Caspian to the Southern Gulf, from the Tedjen to the Tigris, were overrun and plundered, and that such places as failed at the first summons to open their gates underwent the severest punishment.

Before his career was arrested by death, Zingis, satiated with blood, and at length awake to the insanity of his exterminating system, wished to repair the ruin he had caused; but it was too late, and he bequeathed to his children his desolated dominions. To the share of Hoolaku it fell to complete the subjugation of Persia; and with an army of 120,000 horsemen, and 1000 families of Chinese artificers and engineers, the grandson of the Mogul chief marched from the conquest of Allahamowt towards Constantinople. But the persuasions of Nazir u Dien, the celebrated astronomer, diverted the storm to the City of the Faithful, the splendid abode of the family of Abbas. The last remaining phantom of that once powerful dynasty was swept away by the torrent; the ruins of Bagdad were deluged with the blood of its citizens; and the empire of the caliphs passed into the hands of a barbarian.

But Hoolaku was not in all respects a barbarian. Conquest and vengeance claimed their day and their victims; but he could sheathe the sword, and contemplate the enjoyments of literature and science. In his residence on the fair plains of Maragha, he solaced his hours of repose with the converse of philosophers and sages. The learned Nazir u Dien, released by him from the prisons of the Ismaelians, was supplied with the means of constructing an observatory, from which, under his auspices, came forth the well-known astronomical work known by the name of the Eelkhanee Tablea.*

Abaka Khan, the son of Hoolaku, was distinguished for

amounted, it is asserted, to the number of 1,747,000. In this the native authors, followed by Petri la Croix, as well as the Habeeb al Seyer, agree; and another work declares that it took twelve days to count the bodies. But a nearly equal number of slain is by the same writers assigned to the sacks of Meru, Herat, and Bagdad, forming a total far beyond all credibility.

* *Eelkhanee*, or chief of the tribes, was the modest title assumed by the grandson of Zingis. The tables of Nazir u Dien, and Ulugh Beg are still highly esteemed, and are referred to for the latitude and longitude of many places not yet fixed by European observation.

wisdom and clemency ; but, as if the Divine decree had gone forth against the lasting prosperity of despotic dynasties, we look in vain for events of splendour or of interest in the subsequent reigns. A gleam of reviving glory did indeed illumine that of Ghazan ; and his Institutes, which were compiled from many sources, are still celebrated in the East. His son Mohammed Khedabundeh is principally famous for being the first Persian monarch who proclaimed himself of the sect of Ali, and for building the city of Sultanieh, where his tomb still forms a conspicuous object. From his death until the conquests of Timur, the history of the country affords nothing beyond the ordinary detail of civil broils, crimes, murders, and disturbances, which are ever the prelude to some great revolution.

The vast regions of Scythia have often been termed the birth-place of heroes,—the teeming laboratory whence nations ready formed ever and anon issue to supplant the enfeebled inhabitants of more genial climes. Timur or Tamerlane claimed ancestry in the same stock as Zingis, but derived his immediate descent from Karachar Nevian, the counsellor of Zagatai Khan, son of that conqueror. Brave and energetic from his earliest youth, he assumed that share in the struggles of the times to which he was called by his birth as hereditary prince of Kesh, and by his rank as commander of 10,000 horse, bestowed on him by the khakhan or emperor. But it was not till the age of twenty-five, and when the successors of Tuglick Timur, monarch of Cashgar and Jitteh, or Turkistan, in Mavar al Nahar, had forced all the petty princes to flight or to submission, that the spirit of the future conqueror was called fully into action. From that period his life became a continued scene of enterprise, danger, distress, or triumph, until the invader was repelled ; and at the age of thirty-four the deliverer of his country was hailed as supreme ruler, in a general corultai, or diet of the whole Zagataian empire.

With his own hands he placed on his head the crown of gold, and girt on the imperial cincture ; yet, while the princes and nobles showered upon him gold and jewels, and hailed him as Lord of the Age and Conqueror of the World, Timur, with a modesty, the offspring of prudence as much as of humility, declined these titles; contenting himself with the simple appellation of Ameer, noble or chief, by which to this

day he is generally recognised in the East. His patience and perseverance during the struggle were not less conspicuous than his courage and sagacity in managing the discordant materials of his power, and in seizing every opportunity for increasing it. "I once," says Timur himself in his Institutes, "was forced to take shelter from my enemies in a ruined building, where I sat alone for many hours. To divert my mind from my hopeless condition, I fixed my observation upon an *ant* that was carrying a grain of corn larger than itself up a high wall. I numbered the efforts it made to accomplish this object; the grain fell sixty-nine times to the ground, but the insect persevered, and the seventieth time it reached the top of the wall. The sight gave me courage at the moment, and I never forgot the lesson it conveyed."*

The devoted attachment of his followers and kinsmen, and the patriarchal manners of a Tartar tribe, are well portrayed by himself in the work above quoted. He was encamped in the vicinity of Balkh with a very small force, and after keeping watch during the whole of a night dedicated to meditation and prayer, was, towards morning, engaged in earnest supplication,—"imploring Almighty God," says he, "that he would deliver me from that wandering life. . . . And I had not yet rested from my devotions, when a number of people appeared afar off; and they were passing along in a line with the hill: and I mounted my horse and came behind them, that I might know their condition, and what men they were. And they were in all seventy horsemen; and I asked of them, saying, 'Warriors, who are ye?' and they answered me, 'We are the servants of the Ameer Timur, and we wander in search of him, and, lo! we find him not.' And I said unto them, 'How say ye if I be your guide, and conduct ye unto him?' And one of them put his horse to speed, and went and carried the news to the leaders, saying, 'We have found a guide who can lead us to the Ameer Timur.' And the leaders drew back the reins of their horses, and gave orders that I should appear before them. And they were three troops; and the leader of the first was Tuglick Kojeh Berlaus, and the leader of the second

* A similar incident inspired Robert Bruce, the restorer of the Scottish monarchy, with courage to persevere in his patriotic undertaking.

was Ameer Syf u Dien, and the leader of the third was Tou-buck Bahauder. And when their eyes fell upon me, they were overwhelmed with joy ; and they alighted from their horses, and they came and kneeled ; and they kissed my stirrup. I also alighted from my horse and took each of them in my arms ; and I put my turban on the head of Tug-llick Kojeh ; and my girdle, which was very rich in jewels, and wrought with gold, I bound on the loins of Ameer Syf u Dien ; and I clothed Tou-buck Bahauder in my cloak. And they wept, and I wept also. And the hour of prayer was arrived, and we prayed together ; and I collected my people together and made a feast."

With qualities so ingratiating, and the high mental superiority which Timur possessed over the rude soldiers of Turkistan, his success was certain. Unchecked by human sympathies or feelings, while his ambition increased with the power of gratification, he led his myriads with appalling rapidity over country after country, trampling monarchs and their armies into dust,—razing cities, and converting fertile plains into smoking deserts. From the banks of the Irtisch to the gates of Moscow, Tartary was subdued. Scaling the Hindoo-Coosh, "those stony girdles of the earth," his fierce Moguls stooped as an eagle on the rich fields of Hindostan, deluged them with blood, burnt the temples, exterminated the idolaters, and compelled conversion. Having approached with the fury of the advancing wave, he retreated with the celerity of the retiring tide, leaving ruin and disaster behind.

The conquest of Persia and Armenia, of Syria, Asia Minor, Georgia, and the Caucasus, was more arduous. The warlike Bajazet sat on the Ottoman throne, and was master of vast resources. Yet the vigorous hostilities of a few years effected this gigantic enterprise ; and the bloody field of Angora saw Timur without a rival in the Eastern World, and his antagonist a captive.

Persia, divided into petty states, was in no condition to resist the invader. Gheas u Dien, prince of Khorasan, after standing a siege in Herat, was forced to submit. Nishapour and Subzawar opened their gates and were spared. Nissa, Abiverd, and Dereguz, were ravaged in the ensuing spring ; and the strong fortress of Kelaat surrendered at discretion. The ruler of Mazunderan next tendered his homage, and Khorasan and Seistan were awed into obedience. On the

first opportunity the people broke out into insurrection, provoking punishment by acts of unavailing treachery ; and Timur visited them with signal chastisement. Swarms of Toorkee soldiers were let loose upon the country ; heaps of carcasses and pyramids of heads were raised ; and the king and nobles were sent captives to Samarcand. A rebellious chieftain was hunted through Mekran ; Candahar and Kelaat were taken by assault ; and the Afghans of the Solymon-Koh, who, after submitting, had thrown off their allegiance, were extirpated or carried into slavery. Rhé was plundered ; Seltanieh yielded to an impost ; Saree and Amol were saved by opportune obedience. Irak was subdued and its strongholds destroyed. Azerbaijan then became the theatre of pillage and bloodshed ; and even the flattering historian of the house of Timur declares, that the carnage that depopulated Nakshivan and the fair valley of the Araxes was *horrible*.

The capture of Bagdad, as related by the same author,* affords a characteristic picture of the indomitable resolution of Timur, and the resistless intrepidity of his troops. On the approach of the Tartars, a carrier-pigeon was despatched from Kubbeh Ibramlic, a place of pilgrimage, about twenty-seven leagues north-west of the capital, with a note to warn the sultan of his danger ; and Ahmed Eelkhanee removed his family and effects to the south side of the Tigris, breaking down the bridge and sinking the boats. The invader, on discovering this circumstance, compelled the chief person of the place to send another pigeon, with a notification in the same handwriting, that the alarm was a false one ; and this stratagem relaxed the sultan's vigilance, though it did not throw him entirely off his guard. A march of the incredible length of nearly eighty miles, without a halt, brought Timur and his army to the banks of the Tigris, on the morning of the 5th September, 1393 ; and the emperor, who, on horseback on the opposite side, anxiously watched the eastern horizon, heard the mingled din of the horns, kettledrums, and trumpets, and saw the countless multitudes blackening the plain as squadron followed squadron with fearful rapidity. Without once stopping they moved onward, plunging into

* See Petit la Croix's translation of Shereef u Dien Ali, and Price's Mahommedanism, vol. iii. p. 183, *et seq.*

the rapid stream as into a familiar element. Above as well as below the city, and through every avenue, they rushed, till no difference could be discerned between the water and the dry land, both were so completely covered with the armed throng. The inhabitants stood gazing with astonishment, "biting their fingers," asking each other what manner of men these might be, and acknowledging in the success of such boldness the evidence of Divine protection. The sultan instantly fled, and was followed by a large party of Toorks headed by their bravest officers. All day and night the chase continued, and next morning found the pursuers on the bank of the Euphrates, which they crossed, partly by the assistance of boats, partly by swimming. But the strength of the horses was not equal to the zeal of the riders. All had sunk under fatigue, except forty-five of the best mounted ameers and generals, when they overtook the retreating party, 2000 strong, on the celebrated plain of Kerbelah. Two hundred of the sultan's force turned and spurred against the jaded Tartars, who, dismounting, repulsed their opponents with flights of arrows. This manœuvre was frequently repeated; till at length the pursuers being nearly exhausted, the fugitives suddenly brought the combat to issue hand to hand. Many were killed, but the assailants were driven back; and the sultan, followed by his escort, escaped, leaving the bloody and hard-fought field to the wearied Tartars.

We shall dwell no longer on the exploits of Tamerlane, who, at his death, in 1405, bequeathed the Zagataian empire to his grandson Peer Mohammed.* That prince's claim was disputed by his cousin Khuleel Sultan;† and the contest was terminated by the murder of the former. The latter fell the victim of his infatuated attachment to the beautiful Shad ul Mulk;‡ and the virtuous Shah Mirza, youngest son of Timur, who in the lifetime of his father had governed Khorasan, was at length hailed as sovereign. Inheriting no passion for conquest, this monarch sought but to heal the wounds inflicted in the former reign. He rebuilt Herat and Meru; and his

* Son of Jehanjire Mirza, eldest son of Timur.

† Son of Meran Shah Mirza, third son of Timur.

‡ A female of worse than doubtful character, for whom Khuleel squandered the immense treasures amassed by his grandfather. She was at least faithful to him,—for when he died, she struck a poniard to her heart, and the lovers were buried in one tomb at Rhé. See De Guignes, and Malcolm's History.

splendid court became the resort of the philosopher, the man of science, and the poet. His only wars of importance were with the rebellious Turkomans of Asia Minor, whom he completely subjected.

Ulugh Beg, the son of Shah Rokh, a prince devoted to scientific pursuits, was called to the throne at the death of his father; but his reign is chiefly remarkable for the assembly of astronomers convoked by him, whose labours produced that set of tables which bear his name, and are still highly valued. He was deposed and put to death in 1449, by his son Abdul Lateef, who in his turn was slain within six months by his soldiers.

Persia was once more the prey of that confusion which always attends the decay of a dynasty; and the kingdom at length fell into the hands of three separate sovereigns. Of these, Sultan Hussein Mirza, a descendant of Timur, kept a splendid court at Herat, and governed Khorasan.* Kara Yussuff, the Turkoman chief of the Black Sheep, acquired possession of Azerbijan, Irak, Fars, and Kerman; but Uzun Hussun, chief of the Turkomans of the White Sheep, who fixed himself in Armenia, Mesopotamia, and part of Asia Minor, subsequently drove him out, and, having acquired all Western Persia, attacked the Turkish emperor Mohammed II. This rash attempt was checked by a severe defeat, which terminated his schemes of ambition. His sons, grandsons, and nephews contended for his territories, but their ephemeral existence was cut short by the rise of a new and more vigorous power; when Persia, so long wasted by foreign oppression and internal disorder, saw at length some prospect of repose under the powerful sceptre of a native prince.

* He was in fact nominal ruler of the empire of Timur, and for some time successfully resisted the incursions of the Uzbeks, who, in their turn, under Shabibane Khan, drove out his sons and overthrew the Mogul power. Much regarding this prince may be learned from that excellent work, the "Memoirs of Baber," translated by Dr. Leyden and Mr. Erakine.

CHAPTER VII.

From the Rise of the Suffaveans to the Present Time.

Sheik Suffee u Dien—Sudder u Dien—Origin of the Kuzzilbash Tribes—Sultan Hyder—Shah Ismael—Shah Tamasp—First accredited Envoy from England—Shah Abbas the Great—Anecdote—The Shirleys—Sir Dodmore Cotton—Character of Abbas—Shah Suffee—Abbas II.—Shah Solymen—Shah Hussein—Rebellion of Meer Vais—Invasion of Persia by Mahmoud Ghiljee—Siege, Famine, and Fall of Ispahan—Abdication of Hussein—Atrocities committed by the Afghans—Death of Mahmoud—Succeeded by Ashruff—Rise of Nadir Kouli—He is crowned at Mogan—Conquest of India—Subsequent Crimes and Fate—Troubles after his Death—Kureem Khan—Struggles between the Zund and Kujur Tribes for the Throne—Terminate in Favour of Aga Mohammed Khan Kujur—His Character and Fate—Accession of Futeh Ali Shah—Principal Events of his Reign—War and Treaty of Peace in 1828 with Russia—Murder of Mr. Grebayadoff—Expedition of the Prince Royal into Khorasan—Probable Downfall of the Kujur Dynasty.

In the town of Ardebil lived Sheik Suffee u Dien, a holy person, who drew his lineage from Moossa Kauzim, the seventh Imam. His mantle descended with increased sanctity to his son Sudder u Dien, whom sovereigns visited in his cell; even the great Tamerlane condescending to repair thither to be refreshed by his blessing. "Is there aught that Timur can do for thy comfort or satisfaction?" demanded the conqueror. "Give up to me those Turks whom thou hast carried off as captives," was the disinterested reply; and the request being granted, the saint clothed and dismissed them with presents. The tribes to which they belonged declared themselves the disciples and champions of their benefactor.*

Their children," says Sir John Malcolm, "preserved sacred the obligation of their fathers; and the descendants of the captives of Timur became the supporters of the family of Suffee, and enabled the son of a devotee to ascend one of the most splendid thrones in the world."

* The Zeenut al Tuareek relates this fact. The names of the seven tribes, who afterward were distinguished by a particular headdress, and termed Kuzzilbashes, were the Oostajaloo, the Shamloo, the Nikaloo, the Baharloo, the Zoolkuddur, the Kujur, and the Aftshar.

Sultan Hyder,* fifth in descent from Sheik Suffee, in whose blood mingled that of the powerful chief of the White Sheep, Uzun Hussun, was the first of the race who obtained temporal power; but he fell in an enterprise against Shirwan, and his tomb at Ardebil is still a place of pilgrimage. Yakoob, a descendant of Uzun, slew Ali, the successor of Hyder; but in 1499, a few years after the death of Yakoob, we find Ismael, third son of Hyder by a daughter of the said Hussun, heading his adherents at the age of fourteen, and defeating the hereditary enemy of his family, the ruler of Shirwan. A like good fortune attended his arms in two encounters with princes of the White Sheep, and made him master of Azerbijan. In the succeeding campaign he got possession of Irak; and in four years after taking the field all Persia had submitted to his sway.

Ismael, not being born the chief of a tribe, had no hereditary quarrels to avenge; and, instead of being an object of hostility to any, was rather regarded with reverence and devotion by all. Professing the doctrines of the Sheahs,—which, being the least powerful of the two great Mohammedan sects, was therefore the most zealous and united,—he availed himself of the enthusiasm of his followers; and, secure in the devotion of the seven Kuzzilbash tribes, who had consecrated their swords to the defence of their king and religion, the descendant of Sheik Suffee proceeded fearlessly in his career of victory.

For fifteen years fortune smiled on his arms. Bagdad and its dependencies were subdued; the Uzbecks were driven from Khorasan; their prince, the brave Shahibanee Khan,†

* Sultan and shah were common titles, assumed by religious ascetics, probably in allusion to the celestial kingdom they are supposed to enjoy.

† An incident highly characteristic of the country and times occurred on the death of this monarch. The prince of Mazunderan, who still held out against Shah Ismael, and who had often declared, in the idiomatic language of his country, that "his hand was on the skirt of Shahibanee Khan's robe" (that is, he depended on him for protection), was one day sitting in court surrounded by his nobles, when a stranger entering, addressed him thus:—"Prince, thou hast often declared that thy hand was on the skirt of Shahibanee Khan; thou mayst now boast that his is upon thine." With these words, drawing a human hand from under his garment, he threw it upon the skirt of the prince's robe, and, rushing through the midst of the astonished attendants, escaped uninjured. It was the severed hand of Shahibanee Khan, who had fallen in a decisive action near Merv. By the order of his conqueror, his body was dismembered, and the limbs were despatched to different places as ghastly

was killed, and Balkh acknowledged his authority. But a more formidable enemy was yet to be encountered. Sultan Selim, fired with pious zeal, advanced from Constantinople to crush the rising power of Persia. The armies met on the frontiers of Azerbaijan, where, in spite of prodigies of valour, Ismael was defeated; and although his adversary reaped no real advantage from his dear-bought victory, the disappointment was so severe that he was never again seen to smile.

On Selim's death the son of Hyder crossed the Aras and subdued Georgia; but he soon afterward died at Ardebil, leaving a name on which the Persians dwell with enthusiasm, as the restorer of their country, the founder of the most brilliant of their Mohammedan dynasties, as well as of their national faith,—the tenets of the Sheahs.

Tamasp succeeded his father when only ten years of age; and his reign was long and prosperous, although at first disturbed by the mutual jealousies of the Kuzzilbash chiefs. His territories were invaded by the Uzbecks on the east, and the Ottomans on the west; both of whom were repulsed. He hospitably received Humaioon, emperor of India, who had been forced to fly by his rebellious nobles; and the aid granted by him enabled the exiled monarch to regain his throne. Anthony Jenkinson, one of the earliest of English adventurers to Persia, visited the court of Tamasp as an envoy from Queen Elizabeth; but the intolerance of the Mohammedan sovereign drove the Christian from his presence.

The family of Shah Tamasp was numerous, and all his sons in succession made an effort for the crown; but their short reigns merit little notice. Hyder, Ismael, Mohammed, passed away; Humza Mirza, his son, was assassinated; when at length a new claimant for the throne, supported by two powerful Kuzzilbash chiefs, appeared in the person of Abbas, youngest brother of the murdered Humza. This prince, who when an infant had been appointed governor of Khorasan, under tutelage of Ali Kouli Khan Shamloo, was, in 1582, proclaimed king by the discontented nobles of that province and forced to appear in arms against his father.

tokens of victory. The skin of the head, stuffed with hay, was sent to the Turkish emperor at Constantinople; and the scull, set in gold, was put to the horrid use of a drinking-cup, and thus employed by Shah Ismael on great occasions.

In 1585 they led him towards Irak ; Casbin surrendered, and Sultan Mohammed, deserted by his army, is not mentioned again in history. Foreign aggressions and internal disturbances, however, still prevailed. The Uzbecks on the one hand, and the Ottomans on the other, ravaged the country, and rival chieftains pursued their own quarrels in their sovereign's name. Abbas did not remain long a pageant in the hands of others ; and three busy years saw him in undisputed possession of power.

In the spring of 1589 the Turks again invaded Persia, when, in order to watch their movements, he encamped on the banks of the Georgian Kour. While standing one day near the river with a few of his generals, some of the enemy's officers invited the party to cross and partake of their hospitality. Abbas instantly complied, was well entertained, and gave in return an invitation to his new friends. "We shall attend you with pleasure," said one of the Turks, "as we expect you will contrive to obtain for us a sight of your young monarch, whose fame already surpasses his years, and who gives promise of attaining to great glory." The prince smiled, and promised to do his utmost to gratify their wishes. The behaviour of the Persians, on regaining the opposite side of the stream, soon convinced them that their guest was the sovereign whom they desired so much to see. Abbas enjoyed their surprise, repaid their hospitality sumptuously, and dismissed them loaded with presents.

This reign witnessed the commencement of an amicable intercourse between the English and Persian nations, which subsisted for many years. Sir Anthony Shirley, a gentleman of family, was induced by the Earl of Essex to proceed to the court of Abbas, whither he repaired with his brother Sir Robert and twenty-six followers, "gallantly mounted and richly furnished," and bearing valuable gifts, as a soldier of fortune desirous of entering his service. The king received him with marked distinction, promised every encouragement, and gave him splendid presents. For example, he sent forty horses all caparisoned, two of the saddles being gilded, and adorned with rubies and turquoises, the rest either plated with silver or covered with embroidered velvet ; sixteen mules and twelve camels laden with tents and furniture for his house or for travelling ; and, lastly, one thousand tomans in money. The monarch afterward treated the Eng-

lishman with an extraordinary degree of familiarity. "Since he hath been with me," says one of the royal letters, "we have daily eaten out of one dish and drunk of one cup, like two brothers."

Nor was this confidence misplaced. The military skill of the Shirleys enabled Abbas to discipline his army, to organize an efficient artillery, and thus to overthrow the Ottoman power, which till then had been so formidable to Persia. In the decisive action, in which 100,000 Turks were dispersed by little more than 60,000 warriors on the opposite side, Sir Robert attended the king, and received three wounds. On the evening of the victory, as the latter sat on the field of battle conversing with his chief officers and some of his principal captives, a man of uncommon stature was led past by a youth to whom he had surrendered. The shah demanded who he was. "I belong to the Kurd family of Mookree," was the reply. "Deliver him to Roostum Beg," said the monarch, recollecting that a member of his household so named and of the same tribe had a feud with the prisoner's kindred. But Roostum refused to receive him. "I hope your majesty will pardon me," said he; "my honour, it is true, demands his blood; but I have made a vow never to take advantage of an enemy who is bound, and in distress." A speech so noble seemed to reflect upon the king, who, in the irritation of the moment, ordered the captain of his guard to strike off the prisoner's head. The Kurd, hearing this command, burst his bonds, drew his dagger, and sprang towards Abbas. A struggle ensued, and all the lights being extinguished, no one dared to strike lest he should pierce the monarch instead of his assailant. There was a moment of inexpressible horror, until the royal voice was heard to exclaim twice, "I have seized his hand! I have seized his hand!" Lights were brought—the captive was slain by a hundred swords,—and the king, who had wrested the dagger from him, reseated himself in the assembly, and continued "to drink goblets of pure wine and to receive the heads of his enemies till twelve o'clock at night."* In consequence of this victory, not only were the Turks kept in check during

* Malcolm's History, from Anthoine de Govrea and the Zubd al Tasseekk,—the heads thus received, according to the custom of the kings of Persia, are said to have amounted to 20,545 !

his reign, but the whole of their possessions on the Caspian, in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kurdistan, Bagdad, Mosul, and Diarbekir, were reannexed to the Persian empire; while on the east the incursions of the Uzbecks were completely controlled, and Khorazan delivered from their ravages.

The prosperity of the Portuguese settlement at Ormuz had excited the envy of Abbas. He conceived that the conquest of it would add greatly to his resources; and aware that he could effect nothing without naval co-operation, he applied to the English East India Company, who, listening to the suggestions of avarice, and jealous of a flourishing rival, readily gave their assistance. The place fell, after a brave defence; but both parties were disappointed. The Persian monarch found that his vision of wealth shrunk from the touch of a despot; while the British discovered that the commerce which they desired to turn into the channel of Gombroon could not be allured to the ports of an arbitrary government; and Ormuz, accordingly, once the richest emporium in the East, soon relapsed into its original insignificance, affording a striking example both of the beneficial effects of a free trade, and of the withering operation of commercial jealousy.

Extravagant hopes were entertained in England of the advantages of a mercantile intercourse with Persia, and, in order to establish it, various negotiations were undertaken on both sides; but they were all thwarted in the end by the intrigues of a suspicious minister and the death of the diplomats to whom the arrangements were ultimately intrusted. The reception by the shah of Sir Dodmore Cotton, ambassador from James I., was splendid and flattering. He and his retinue were admitted into an antechamber, where, instead of coffee, the usual refreshment, a sumptuous dinner was served in gold, with abundance of wine in goblets and flagons of the same precious metal. From this apartment they were ushered through two others richly ornamented and filled with golden vessels adorned with rich jewels, which contained rose-water, flowers, and wine. They then entered the hall of audience, round the walls of which the chief officers were seated like statues; for not a muscle moved, and all was dead silence. Boys with spangled turbans and embroidered dresses presented wine in gorgeous cups to all who desired it. The king wore a dress of red cloth, without any

finery, with the exception of a magnificent hilt to his sabre. The nobles, too, who sat near him, were plainly attired. The reply of the shah with regard to the object of the mission was most gracious. He was much amused by Sir Dodmore Cotton's inability to comply with the custom of the country in sitting cross-legged ; but being desirous of pleasing his guests, he drank to the health of the King of England. At the name of his sovereign the ambassador stood up and took off his hat. Abbas smiled, and likewise raised his turban in token of respect.

He was, in truth, in many respects an enlightened prince. The improvement of his dominions was his first care ; and if he did not in every instance adopt the best method for promoting it, ignorance and the prejudices of his country, combined with those habits of despotic authority which no absolute monarch can entirely shake off, ought chiefly to bear the blame. In administering justice Abbas was strict, and at times even severe ; but decided measures were required to control the turbulent tribes, who were constantly striving for pre-eminence. Besides, the mode of inflicting punishment impresses a stranger with the idea of greater cruelty than really belongs to the system ; for all malefactors are executed in the presence of the sovereign, or at all events before the royal dwelling, whether in camp or in city. "Let us just imagine," says a judicious author, "what appearance it would have were every criminal to be sentenced to death by the King of England, and were the only place of execution to be the court-yard of St. James's." It must, however, be owned that, in his latter years, the Persian king became very prone to suspicion, and whenever that feeling seized his mind, the instant destruction of the parties followed. Yet, however prodigal of blood, he must be acknowledged to have benefited his country. His revenues were spent on improvements. Caravansaries, bridges, aqueducts, bazaars, mosques, and colleges arose in every quarter. Is-pahan, the capital, was splendidly embellished. Mushed was ornamented ; and the ruins of the palaces of Furrabad in Mazunderan, and of Ashruff in Astrabad, still declare his taste and munificence. The latter establishment consisted of six separate palaces, each in its respective garden, and all enclosed by a fortified wall. The heights around were occupied by sentinels, who had orders to shoot any one who

was found overlooking it, even accidentally, at whatsoever distance. There was, besides, the pleasure-house of Sooffee-abad, built on an eminence above the rest, and commanding a view of the plains of Mazunderan and of the distant Caspian Sea. The noble causeway through the last-named province is a lasting monument of this monarch's attention to the prosperity of his subjects. Even to this day, if a stranger, observing an edifice of more than ordinary beauty or solidity, inquire who was its founder, the answer is sure to be, "It is the work of Shah Abbas the Great."

In his foreign policy, too, he was generally liberal; though his treatment of the conquered princes of Georgia and the inhabitants of that unfortunate kingdom was, as Chardin says, "a disgusting mixture of the lowest political intrigue, sensual passion, religious persecution, and tyrannical cruelty." Nor can his transportation of colonies from one district to another, however sanctioned by the example of former despots, or palliated by an obvious regard to the comfort of the persons whom he removed, be freed from the imputation of outrage upon the feelings of his subjects.

His toleration of those professing other religions, particularly of Christians, is the more remarkable, when we consider the bigoted family from which he sprang. Not only did he live in the most intimate terms with his English guests, and bestow on his favourite Sir Robert Shirley a beautiful Circassian wife, but the Mohammedan king actually stood godfather to the child of the Christian knight. Yet Abbas, with all this practical liberality, and though he indulged in the forbidden juice of the grape, laid claim to peculiar sanctity of character. Every year saw him a pilgrim to some holy shrine,—at Nujjiff he swept the tomb of Ali a whole fortnight,—an office permitted only to persons of exemplary life; and once he walked on foot from Ispahan to perform his devotions at the tomb of Imam Reza in Mushed.

As a parent and relative his character appears in a very revolting light. The bitterest foes of an absolute prince are those of his own household. Abbas had four sons, on whom he doted as long as they were children; but when they grew up towards manhood, they became objects of jealousy, if not of hatred; their friends were considered as his enemies; and praises of them were as a knell to his soul. These unhappy feelings were aggravated by the representa-

tions of some of his courtiers ; and the princes, harassed and disgusted by their father's behaviour towards them, listened to advice which suggested a direct but dangerous way to safety. The eldest, Suffee Mirza, a brave and high-spirited youth, fell the first victim of this fatal suspicion. The veteran whom the king first proposed to employ as the assassin of his son tendered his own life as a sacrifice to appease the monarch's anger, but refused to cut off the hope of Persia. Another was found less scrupulous. Behbood Khan, a creature of the court, on pretence of a private injury, stabbed the prince as he came from the bath ; but the shelter which he received in the sanctuary of the royal stable,* and his subsequent promotion, showed by whom the dagger had been pointed. Neither the tyrant nor his instrument, however, remained long unpunished. Abbas, stung with remorse, put to death on various pretexts the nobles who had poisoned his mind against his heir ; while for Behbood he contrived a more ingenious torture, commanding him to bring the head of his own son. The devoted slave obeyed, and when he presented the gory countenance of his only child, the king, with a bitter smile, demanded what were his feelings. "I am miserable," was the reply. "You should be happy, Behbood," rejoined the tyrant, "for you are ambitious, and in your feelings you at this moment equal your sovereign."

But repentance wrought no amendment in the gloomy soul of Abbas. One of his sons had died before the murder of Suffee Mirza ; and the eyes of the rest were put out by order of their inhuman parent. The eldest of these, Khodabundeh, had two children, of whom Fatima, a lovely girl, was the delight of her grandfather. Goaded to desperation, the unhappy prince seized his little daughter one day as she came to caress him, and with maniac fury deprived her of life. He then groped for his infant boy, but the shrieking mother bore it from him, and carried it to Abbas. The rage of the distracted monarch at the loss of his favourite gave a momentary joy to the miserable father, who concluded the tragedy by swallowing poison. Horrors like these are of daily occurrence in the harem of an Eastern tyrant. Yet

*The royal stable is the most sacred of asylums. They say that no horse will ever bear to victory a monarch by whom its sanctity has been violated. When picketed in the open air, the safest place is at the head-stall of the horse.

such is the king whom the Persians most admire ; and so precarious is the nature of despotic power, that monarchs of a similar character alone have successfully ruled the nation. "When this prince ceased to reign," says Malcolm, "Persia ceased to prosper."

By the desire of the expiring sovereign, Sam Mirza, the son of the unfortunate Sufee, was placed on the throne with the title of Shah Sufee, which he occupied fourteen years. His son Abbas II. succeeded him at the age of ten (A. D. 1641) ; and his reign, which extended to twenty-five years, was prosperous, in spite of his licentious habits. Europeans, of whatever rank or profession, were admitted to his orgies, which very often ended fatally. Deeds were committed under the influence of wine, of which the king in vain repented on awaking to consciousness ; for he was not naturally cruel. He was hospitable and generous ; and fugitive princes more than once obtained relief from his munificence.

Through the intrepid loyalty of Aga Moubaric, a eunuch, Sufee Mirza, eldest son of Abbas, was saved from death or blindness, and mounted the throne with the title of Shah Solyman. Unwarlike and dissolute, his reign of twenty-nine years was divided between the pleasures of the harem and of the feast ; while the Uzbecks and other enemies resumed with impunity those aggressions which the energy of former monarchs had repressed. His drunken revels, like those of his father, were often stained with blood. He gave little heed to the cares of government ; but his court was not less splendid than that of any of his predecessors. Foreigners, especially Europeans, were at all times welcome, and received protection and encouragement. On his deathbed, Solyman observed to those around him, in reference to the choice of a successor, "If you seek for ease, let Hussein Mirza be elevated to the throne ; if you desire the glory of Persia, place the crown on the head of Abbas Mirza." The officers of the harem, who had engrossed every place of trust, attributed little importance to the latter object,—they sought only to preserve their influence, and the meek but imbecile Hussein was therefore invested with the nominal dignity of shah.

The bigotry and weakness of this prince were more disastrous to his country than the crimes of his ancestors. The nobles and chiefs, seeing every place of confidence in the

hands of eunuchs, priests, and zealots, retired in disgust from court. Their passive insensibility was in truth one of the most dangerous symptoms of the times ; but an hereditary respect for the family of Suffee prevented open revolt ; and the first twenty years of Hussein's reign passed in that deep stillness which often precedes a furious storm.

The Afghan tribes of Ghiljee and Abdallee, who had long been subject to Persia, and were often oppressed, provoked at length by the tyranny of Goorgeen Khan, broke into rebellion. Headed by Meer Vais, a brave but artful chief, they put the obnoxious governor to death, and gained possession of the fortress of Candahar before a whisper of the insurrection had gone abroad. The mask being thus thrown off, Meer Vais proceeded to strengthen himself by every means ; while the court of Ispahan endeavoured to restore order by negotiation. A series of successes in Khorasan imboldened the insurgents, who defeated the grand army, commanded by Khoosroo Khan, Waljee of Georgia ; and Meer Vais, having made himself master of his native province of Candahar, assumed the ensigns of royalty. On the death of this prince, the cares of government devolved upon his brother Meer Abdoola, a timid ruler, who was assassinated by Mahmoud, son of his predecessor,—a name which the empire had long cause to remember with abhorrence.

The clouds which were gathering round the setting sun of Persia gave this leader ample leisure to mature his plans. The Uzbecks had recommenced their ravages in Khorasan ; while the tribes of Kurdistan pillaged the country almost to the gates of Ispahan. The Abdallee Afghans had taken Herat, and soon after established themselves in Mushed. The Arabian governor of Muscat had subdued the islands in the Persian Gulf, and the Lesghees, on the side of Georgia, had attacked Shirwan, and plundered Shamachie ; when, to complete the consternation of the effeminate court, the astrologers predicted the total destruction of the capital by an approaching earthquake. This annunciation produced a universal panic. The king left the city, and the priests assumed the management of affairs, prescribing every measure that fanaticism could suggest to avert the vengeance of Heaven. It was as if a mighty nation were preparing for death ; and when intelligence arrived that Mahmoud Ghiljee, with 25,000 Afghans, had entered the country, the people, labouring

under this unmanly depression, heard it as their inevitable doom.

The progress of the invader by Seistan and Kerman, and thence through the Desert to Goolnabad, a village nine miles from Ispahan, was extremely rapid, and was opposed only by some feeble efforts at negotiation. His army scarce amounted to 20,000 effective men, and was unfurnished with artillery, except some camel-swivels. The royal forces mustered more than 50,000 soldiers, with twenty-four pieces of cannon. The Persians shone in gold and silver, and their pampered steeds were sleek from high feeding and inaction. The Afghans were mounted on horses lean but hardy, and "nothing glittered in their camp but swords and lances." By the advice of the Waliee of Arabia, an action was resolved on. The king's troops drew out of the city, and attacked the enemy, who, feigning flight, threw the assailants into disorder, then, wheeling off on either hand, left them exposed to a severe fire from the camel-artillery. This manœuvre completed their confusion, and occasioned a precipitate flight; and the Afghans seem only to have been prevented from entering Ispahan by the fear of an ambuscade.

The suburbs were immediately reduced; the surrounding country was ravaged; and the city invested, without any effectual opposition, although the Armenians of Julsah offered, if supplied with arms, to defend their quarters. Nay, the inhabitants of Ispahanuc, a small fortified village close to the capital, not only repulsed, but successfully attacked the enemy. Mahmoud determined to have recourse to a blockade; and the misery of Ispahan during the period in which it was beleaguered by the Afghans was dreadful. After exhausting even the most loathsome and unclean substances, many submitted to the dreadful necessity of consuming the flesh of the slain. The ties of nature yielded to the cravings of hunger, and mothers fed on their own offspring. The streets, the squares, and the royal gardens were covered with putrefying carcasses; while the water of the Zeinderood was corrupted by the bodies thrown into it from the walls. Yet one vigorous sally might have prevented all this suffering; for such was the irresolution of the invader, that at an early period he was even disposed to negotiate for an undisturbed retreat. But treachery or cowardice prevailed,

and the people in vain demanded to be led against the enemy.

A capitulation was at length proposed; but the Afghan with inhuman policy procrastinated eight or nine weeks, in order to reduce yet more the still formidable number of his enemies; nor was it until the 21st of October, 1722, after a siege of seven months, that terms were finally agreed on. The following day, Hussein, in deep mourning, attended by his nobles, took a solemn and affecting leave of his people; who on their part, forgetting all their distresses, saw only in their unfortunate sovereign the revered descendant of their glorious monarchs Iamael, Tamasp, and Abbas, and received him with tears and lamentations. Next day he quitted his capital, and, escorted only by 300 troops and a few nobles, proceeded to the enemy's camp to resign his crown. "Son," said the humbled shah to the haughty Afghan, "since the Great Sovereign of the universe wills that I should rule no longer, I resign the empire to thee: may thy reign be prosperous!" With these words, taking from his turban the royal plume, he gave it to the vizier of Mahmoud. But that arrogant conqueror refusing to accept it from any other hands than those of the abdicating sovereign, the latter complied, and, placing the ensign of royalty in his adversary's head-dress, exclaimed, "Reign in peace!" On the subsequent morning, the degraded Hussein was forced to do homage to the Afghan prince; after which the last real monarch of the house of Suffee retired to the prison assigned to him, where, being confined seven years, he was assassinated by Ashruff, the successor of Ghiljee.

Mahmoud was amazed at his success, and, under the chastening influence of fear, adopted conciliatory measures with a view to establish his influence among the vanquished. But as the nation began to shake off the torpor which had overwhelmed it, and parties of Afghans were surprised and destroyed, his policy underwent a fearful change. A sullen gloom overspread his mind, and he seems to have conceived, as the only means of safety, the frantic purpose of exterminating the conquered. The male population of Ispahan still greatly outnumbered his whole army, and he resolved to reduce it to an amount which should no longer excite his apprehensions. The treacherous murder of 300 nobles with all their children, and the massacre of 3000 of Shah Hussein's

guards whom he had taken into pay, formed a prelude to a more dreadful tragedy. Every person that had been in the service of the late shah was proscribed; for fifteen days the streets of Ispahan ran with blood; and so utterly was the spirit of the people broken, that it was a common thing to see one Afghan leading three or four Persians to execution.

Aided by some fresh levies, drawn principally from the Kurdish tribes, Mahmoud had captured Shiraz and several towns of Irak and Fars. But the clamours of his discontented troops and the threats of foreign invasion appalled a mind which, though fierce and cruel, was deficient in firmness; and, accordingly, with the hope of propitiating Divine favour, he shut himself up in a vault fourteen days and nights, fasting and enduring the severest penances. This experiment completed the overthrow of his reason; he raved, shrank from the sight of his friends, and tore his flesh in the violence of his paroxysms; till at length his mother, in compassion to his wretched condition, directed him to be smothered. But this melancholy release was not effected until a fatal order had destined thirty-nine princes of the blood of Sufee to an untimely death; and it is said that the massacre was commenced by his own sabre.

Ashruff, the son of Meer Abdoola and nephew of Meer Vais, succeeded his cousin; and the remaining inhabitants of Ispahan were flattered into pleasing anticipations by the mildness of his opening reign. But his precautions to secure himself and his family, by building a fort in the centre of the city, betrayed his doubt of being able to retain the affections of his subjects. Meantime his attention was occupied by the proceedings of the Ottoman court, which had formed an alliance with the Czar of Russia in order to effect a partition of the fairest provinces of Persia. Against this enemy Ashruff was at first successful, although in the end he was glad to accept a peace on very unfavourable terms. But a more dangerous, though less dreaded, foe had by this time arisen in a quarter quite unexpected.

Nadir Kouli, a chief of the Affshar tribe, who amid the troubles of his native province had risen to great authority by the defeat of one rival after another, joined Tamasp, the son of Shah Hussein, and declared his resolution to drive every Afghan from the soil of Persia. Tamasp, flying from Ispahan, to Mazunderan, had from the day of his father's abdi-

cation assumed royal state, and now, supported by Nadir and the nobles of Khorasan and Mazunderan, was in a condition to exercise the authority of a sovereign, so far as his powerful vassals saw proper to permit. Ashruff sought to dispel the coming storm by attacking the foe while at a distance. But it was Nadir's policy to fight on his own ground; and the victories of Mehmadoost and Sirderra, and the still more decisive field of Moorchacoor, opened the way to the capital itself. In the evening after his success, the wailings of the Afghan females announced to the citizens of Ispahan the result of the conflict. Night passed in brief and melancholy preparations, and the dawn saw men, women, and children in full retreat to Shiraz. The remorseless Ashruff, before he followed, stained his hands with the blood of Shah Hussein, and the pressure of circumstances alone prevented a more general massacre.

Wasting the country as he went, Nadir overtook the enemy at Persepolis. The drooping Afghans fled to Shiraz; they were still 20,000 strong; but their leader having deserted them to make the best of his way homewards with only 300 followers, the bulk of the army dispersed, closely pressed by their exasperated pursuers. Few if any reached Candahar; and Ashruff, while wandering in Seistan, was recognised and slain by Abdoola Khan, a Belooche, who sent his head, together with a large diamond which he wore, to Shah Tamasp. Thus was destroyed the grisly phantom which for seven wretched years had brooded over Persia, converting her fairest provinces into deserts, her cities into charnel-houses, and glutting itself with the blood of a million of her people.

Unhappily it was but a change of tyrants. Nadir, whose ambition was insatiable, knew his power, and soon deposed the pageant whom he had hitherto supported. The mask of obedience was preserved for a while towards the infant son of Tamasp, under the title of Abbas III. But this act of the drama was terminated by the death of the child, which left the victor at full liberty to comply with the solicitations of his officers and his own earnest wishes. On the plains of Mogan, at the festival of the No Roz, 1736, he assumed, with affected reluctance, the symbols of sovereignty; and the new monarch, while announcing the sacrifice of personal comfort he thus made, stipulated that in return his subjects

should renounce the errors of the Sheah heresy, and embrace the orthodox creed of the Sonnees. Many might secretly murmur at this proposal made by the commander of 100,000 veteran troops of the latter faith, but few dared openly to oppose it.

Nadir, having driven the Turks out of Persia, reduced Khorasan, and established tranquillity, prepared for further conquests. Candahar was invested and taken; Balkh fell before the arms of his son Reza Kouli, who, with youthful ardour, passed the Oxus, and defeated the ruler of Bokhara and his Uzbecks. These successes led to further exploits. Afghanistan was subdued; and an affront, real or imaginary, coupled with the effeminate imbecility of the Mogul court, determined Nadir to cross the Indus, and march straight to Delhi.* A single battle, or rather a skirmish and a rout, decided the fate of an empire containing 100,000,000 of souls. The capital offered no resistance; its treasures were plundered, the inhabitants slaughtered, and the de-throned king forced to plead at the conqueror's feet for the lives of his remaining subjects. Loaded with the spoil of the richest empire of the East, the Affshar chief returned home. Kharism was next subdued, and Bokhara only escaped by timely submission. The glorious days of Persia seemed to have returned, and her limits, as of yore, were the Oxus, the Indus, the Caspian, the Caucasus, and the Tigris.

But if the public career of Nadir was glorious, his domestic life was imbittered by the darkest passions. Ambition had rendered him haughty, while avarice made him suspicious and cruel. An attempt on his life in Mazunderan, attributed to his son, Reza Kouli Meeza, who was indeed fierce and rash enough to undertake such a deed, led his father to deprive him of the blessing of sight. "Your crimes have forced me to this dreadful measure," said the king, already half-repentant, as he gazed for the first time on the rayless countenance of his first-born. "It is not my eyes you have put out," replied the youth, "it is those of Persia!"—"The prophetic truth," says Sir John Malcolm, "sank deep into the heart of Nadir, who, becoming from

* See Family Library, No. XLVII. Historical and Descriptive Account of British India.

that moment a prey to remorse and gloomy anticipations, never knew happiness, nor desired that others should feel it." The rest of his life presents but a frightful succession of cruelties. Murder was not confined to individuals; whole cities were depopulated, and men, leaving their abodes, took up their habitations in caverns and deserts, in hopes of escaping his savage ferocity. At length his madness rose to such a height as to suggest the expedient of putting to death all who were objects of his insane fears, including almost every Persian in his army. The Afghans and Turkomans were to execute his commands, and with them he was afterward to retire to Kelaat Nadiree, to live in the enjoyment of riches and repose. But the tyrant's hour had arrived: his iniquitous conspiracy was disclosed to some of the proscribed on the day before that fixed for the massacre. No time was to be lost; and, measures having been arranged, early on the ensuing night Mohammed Ali Khan Affshar and Saleh Beg, the captain of the guard, on pretence of urgent business, rushed past the sentries to the inner tent. Nadir started up and slew two of the meaner assassins; but was in his turn cut down by a blow from Saleh, who instantly despatched him.

Such was the fate of this extraordinary man, and the resemblance between it and that of the despot who preceded him cannot but strike every one. The mind of the former was more elevated than that of Mahmoud; but both were ambitious, and waded through blood and crime to the same objects. Satiated with carnage, a like catastrophe awaited both,—their latter days were rendered miserable by suspicion, and madness closed the scene.

The successors of Nadir, including the inglorious reigns of his nephews, Adil Shah and Ibrahim Khan, and of the blind Shah Rokh, his grandson, merit little notice; but a short view of the state of Persia a few years after the conqueror's death will not be misplaced. At the period in question, Mazunderan and Astrabad had fallen into the hands of Mohammed Hussein Khan, chief of the Kujw tribe. Azerbaijan was ruled by Azad Khan Afghan, a general of Nadir. Hedayut Khan had declared himself independent in Ghilan; and Shah Rokh owed the undisturbed possession of Khorasan to the support of Amed Khan Abdalfee.

In the south, Ali Murdan Khan, a Buchtiaree chief, seized

Ispahan, and proposing to elevate a prince of the house of Suffee to the throne, invited several nobles to join his standard. Among these was Kureem Khan, a chief of the Zund tribe, who, though not conspicuous for rank, was distinguished for good sense and courage. His conduct in the various intrigues and contests for power had raised him so high in the esteem of the soldiers as to excite the jealousy of Ali Murdan Khan, and a rupture was the consequence. But the assassination of his rival by a noble named Mohammed Khan, left Kureem undisputed master of the south of Persia; who, availing himself of his influence with the tribes in that part of the country, summoned them to join him. He was worsted in his encounter with Azad Khan; but in a second engagement utterly discomfited that dangerous enemy in the difficult pass of Kumauridge, when, receiving him on liberal terms into his service, he converted him into an attached friend. Kureem had to endure more than one severe reverse, and was obliged to employ policy as well as boldness before he could destroy Mohammed Hussejn Khan Kujur, the powerful chief of Mazunderan. Nor perhaps would he have succeeded, had not the leaders of the Kujur tribe been at variance among themselves. The conquest of this province was followed by the submission of Ghilan and great part of Azerbijan. The firmness shown by this prince in checking insubordination increased the attachment with which he was regarded by all classes of his subjects, and even the cruelties of his ferocious brother Zukee Khan produced a salutary effect, as long as the severity was not attributed to the monarch. Khorasan was the only province which he did not subdue; and it is said he respected the descendant of Nadir, the blind Shah Rokh, too much to disturb his tranquillity.

Kureem Khan died in 1779, at the age of eighty years, during twenty-six of which he had ruled, if not with glory, at least with uprightness and moderation; and he left a character for equity and humanity which few sovereigns of Persia have ever attained. He wanted not ambition; but it was free from the selfishness and turbulence which generally mingle with that passion. He possessed that noble courage which dares to pardon; and the confidence with which he treated those whom he forgave scarcely ever failed of gaining them completely to his interest. His virtues had nothing

of a romantic cast ; like his other qualities, they were plain and intrinsic. He was pious, but his religion was free from austerity. Naturally cheerful, he enjoyed the pleasures of the world, and desired to see others enjoy them. He lived happily, and his death was that of a father among a loving family. The son of a petty chief, and of a barbarous tribe, he had received but little education : it is said that he could not even write. But he valued learning in others; and his court was the resort of men of liberal studies. His judgment was acute, and always awake to the call of duty or benevolence. Of his love of justice many anecdotes are recorded. One day, after being harassed by a long attendance in public hearing causes, he was about to retire when he was arrested by the cries of a stranger, who, rushing forward, called aloud for redress. "Who are you?" said Kureem. "I am a merchant, and have been robbed and plundered of all I possessed while I slept."—"And why did you sleep?" demanded the monarch in an impatient tone. "Because I made a mistake," replied the trader undauntedly—"I thought that you were awake." The irritation of the royal judge vanished in a moment. Turning to his vizier, he bade him pay the man's losses. "It is our business," he added, "to recover, if we can, the property from the robbers."

By law, the effects of foreigners who die in Persia belong to the king ; but Kureem esteemed this practice as grossly unjust, especially where any relative was proved to exist. One day an officer laid before him an account of the goods of a stranger who had expired in his district. "And what have I to do with this?" exclaimed he. "It has become the property of your majesty," replied the functionary, "and I come to lay it at your feet."—"At mine!" said the king ; "go, go, fellow—I am no eater of carrion (mourdarkhore)—no consumer of dead men's goods. Let the friends of the deceased be sought out, and the property secured for them until claimed."

He used to relate an anecdote of himself, which evinces a good feeling rather uncommon in one whose early habits must have been of a predatory description :—"When I was a poor soldier," said he, "in Nadir's camp, my necessities led me to take from a shop a gold-embossed saddle, sent thither by an Afghan chief to be repaired. I soon afterward heard that the man was in prison, sentenced to be hanged.





Mausoleum of Shah Meer Humza at Shiraz.

My conscience smote me ; I restored the stolen article to the very place from which I had removed it, and watched till it was discovered by the tradesman's wife. She uttered a scream of joy on seeing it, and fell on her knees invoking blessings on the person who had brought it back, and praying that he might live to have a hundred such saddles.—I am quite certain,” continued the king, smiling, “that the honest prayer of the old woman has aided my fortune in attaining the splendour she wished me to enjoy.”

Shiraz was the capital in which Kureem delighted, and which he embellished most usefully and splendidly. The Bazaar e Wuheel, one of the finest in the kingdom, has already been mentioned ; and the mausoleum of the celebrated saint Shah Meer Humza, erected by him, stands conspicuous near the northern entrance of the town. The other cities of the empire likewise experienced his munificence. He never assumed the title of shah, but contented himself with that of vakeel, or lieutenant of the kingdom ; for the pageant of the house of Suffee, set up by Ali Murdan Khan, was still suffered to exist in the fortress of Abadah.

Of four sons who survived him, not one escaped the dangers or intrigues of the numerous chiefs who engaged in the contests which ensued for the crown. The government was first seized by Zukee Khan, while Saduk, his brother, advanced from Bussora with the army he commanded ; but the power of the former was already too firmly established, and the latter was forced to retire. Meantime Aga Mohammed Khan Kujur, who had been detained as a prisoner at Shiraz, fled to Mazunderan, his native country, and announced his determination to compete for the throne. The atrocities of Zukee soon led to his murder, which was perpetrated at Yezdikhanst ; and Saduk hastened to the capital, where he gave orders to put out the eyes of his nephew Abul Futeh Khan, and proclaimed himself king. But the city being besieged by Ali Mourad Khan, the nephew of Zukee, he was forced to surrender at discretion, and, together with most of his sons, was put to death. Not long afterward Ali Mourad sank under the ascendancy of another rival. The struggle at last was confined to Lootf Khan Zund, grandnephew of Kureem, and Aga Mohammed, the Kujur chief already mentioned, and more than six years elapsed ere it was decided.

Of all the characters which belong to this unsettled period, that of Lootf Ali breathes most of the spirit of chivalry. Tall and gracefully formed, with a beautiful and animated countenance, his appearance instantly gained that admiration which his noble qualities commanded. In horsemanship and martial exercises he was unrivalled, and though scarcely twenty years of age when summoned to take a part in active life, his judgment had been matured by constant exertion in the short but stormy reign of his father, Jaffier Khan, and he was already reputed one of the best and bravest soldiers of the time. Unfortunately these brilliant endowments were obscured by violence of passion and excessive pride, which the attainment of power increased to an inordinate degree. Nor was his temper improved by subsequent misfortune : he became fierce, irascible, unrelenting, and endeavoured to remove all obstacles by the influence of terror.

The circumstance which turned the scale of success in favour of a Kujur and against a Zund deserves to be mentioned. Hajji Ibrahim, the son of a respectable magistrate of Shiraz, had by his talents risen under the government of Jaffier to the highest command in Fars. Attached to the father, his devotion to the son was increased by the young man's fine dispositions, which he thought eminently calculated to promote the happiness of his country ; and it was principally by his assistance that Lootf Ali was enabled to make so vigorous a head against his rival. The fickleness of youth, however, led him to affront his faithful minister. Mistrust arose on either side ; and, doubtful of his own life, the hajji determined to place himself under the protection of a sovereign more deserving of confidence. Shiraz was taken by a stratagem, and information instantly despatched to Aga Mohammed Khan. A daring attack made on the advancing army of that chief completely failed, and the empire of Persia was lost to the Zund prince.

We cannot relate the brutal indignities, torments, and mutilation which the victor inflicted upon his captive, before death, in the year 1795, released him from his misery. Still less shall we dwell on the atrocities committed in the city of Kerman in revenge for the assistance rendered by its inhabitants to their legitimate prince. The place was depopulated ; all the full-grown males were murdered or deprived of sight, and turned out into the fields to wander

in helpless blindness. A horrid tribute of human eyes, amounting to a certain number of mauns, was exacted; and the women and children were distributed among the soldiers as slaves.

Aga Mohammed Shah, having tranquillized the southern and central provinces, turned his arms westward, and, overrunning Armenia and Karabaug, marched straight to Tefis, defeated Heraclius, prince of Georgia, sacked the city, and slaughtered or carried off the inhabitants. He then subjected Khorasan, punished the pillaging Turkemans in the vicinity of Astrabad, and took measures to restrain the incursions of the Uzbecks of Bokhara. His expedition to Mushed exhibits one of the darkest pages in his bloody history; for, not content with wresting from the plunderers of Nadir's camp every jewel he could find, he by merciless torture compelled the aged Shah Rokh to give information as to a ruby of immense value that once ornamented the crown of Aurungzebe. Death fortunately ended the life and the sufferings of his victim soon afterward, at Damghan of Khorasan, in the sixty-third year of his age.

The most revolting feature in the character of Aga Mohammed is his tiger-like ferocity. Sir John Malcolm, indeed, exhibits this propensity in a somewhat different light:—"In viewing the life of a monarch like Aga Mohammed Khan," says he, "we should guard against those impressions which the particular view of many of his actions is calculated to make upon the mind. Accustomed to live under a government protected by laws, we associate cruelty and oppression with every act of a despot. His executions are murders; and the destruction of helpless citizens, who in an assault too often share the fate of the garrison, is deemed a horrid massacre. But we must not assume that justice is always violated because the forms of administering it are repugnant to our feelings; and we should recollect that, even among civilized nations, the inhabitants of towns taken by storm are exposed to pillage and slaughter without any charge of barbarity against the victors." These arguments certainly possess considerable weight; but the condition of a people must be deplorable where barbarity stalks abroad under the name of justice.

The early misfortunes of this monarch, by excluding him from the best sympathies of his fellow-men, no doubt con-

tributed to the growth of the unfeeling sternness with which he viewed every thing that came under his notice ; while the restraint in which he was kept taught him patience, self-possession, and dissimulation. "I could not," he has been known to say, "express openly the hatred and revenge I harboured against the murderers of my father and the despoilers of my inheritance ; but while sitting with Kureem Khan in his hall of audience, I often used to cut his fine carpets with a penknife concealed under my cloak, and felt some relief in doing him this secret injury : it was foolish, and betrayed a want of forecast ; for these carpets are now mine, and I might have calculated then on the chance of their becoming so." He seems always to have acted upon this maxim, suppressing his malevolence only when the gratification of it interfered with his interest.

To his own family, with the exception of his nephews, Baba Khan, the present king of Persia, and Hussein Kouli Khan, he behaved barbarously. Mustapha Kouli Khan, his brother, he deprived of sight ; and he inveigled the brave Jaffier Kouli Khan, another brother, by protestations of affection, to come only for one night to Teheran. But that night was fatal ; the unsuspecting guest was despatched by assassins posted in a new palace, which he had gone to visit at the tyrant's desire. The body was brought to the king, who mourned over it with every appearance of frantic grief, and calling his nephew he accused him as the cause of the crime : "It is for you I have done this," said he ; "that gallant spirit would never have suffered you to reign in peace. Persia would have been distracted with continual wars ; and to avoid such calamities I have acted with shameful ingratitude, and sinned deeply against God and man!" Yet with a mockery of piety or timidity of superstition, which it is hard to comprehend, he kept with the dead the oath he had violated to the living, by removing the corpse that very night beyond the city walls.

The first passion of this monarch's heart was love of power,—the second, avarice,—the third, revenge ; and in all these he indulged to excess. He was a keen observer of men, and employed policy as frequently as force to subdue his enemies. His most confidential minister being asked whether he was personally brave, answered, "No doubt ; but yet I can hardly recollect an occasion where he

had an opportunity of displaying courage. That monarch's head," added he, emphatically, "never left work for his hands."

The avarice of Aga Mohammed sometimes betrayed him into awkward and even ludicrous predicaments. While superintending certain punishments one day, he heard a man who had been sentenced to lose his ears offering to the executioner a few pieces of silver "if he would not shave them very close." He ordered the culprit instantly to be called, and told him that if he would double the sum his ears should not be touched. The man, believing this to be only a facetious manner of announcing his pardon, prostrated himself, uttered his thanks, and was retiring, but he was recalled and given to understand that payment was really expected as the condition of his safety. On another occasion he himself disclosed a conspiracy to defraud his nobles. Riding out with some courtiers, a mendicant met the party, to whom the king, apparently struck with his distress, ordered a large sum to be given. The example was of course followed by all, and the beggar obtained a very considerable sum. That night the sovereign's impatience betrayed his secret:—"I have been cheated," said he to his minister; "that scoundrel of a mendicant whom you saw this morning, not only promised to return my own money, but to give me half of what he should receive through its means from others!" Horsemen were instantly ordered in pursuit; but the fellow took care not to be caught, and the courtiers laughed in their sleeve at his majesty's disappointment.

Yet no one was more jealous than Aga Mohammed of the respect due to royalty; and he severely rebuked, and was with difficulty withheld from punishing, one of his lords-in-waiting for using unbecoming expressions towards Timur Shah, king of Cabul, while announcing his ambassador. This politic principle of retrieving the regal dignity from the degradation it had suffered in the ephemeral reigns of preceding monarchs, was sometimes carried so far as to exclude the gratification of his cupidity. His minister Hajji Ibrahim requested permission one day to introduce two individuals who were willing to pay a high rent for the farm of a particular district, but who were of indifferent reputation. The monarch angrily demanded how he dared to propose to bring such persons into his presence? The hajji replied, "May

it please your majesty, they will give double the price that can be obtained from any one else."—"No matter, hajji, the money must be given up; such men must not be permitted to approach the king."

To sum up the character of Aga Mohammed: he was sagacious, a profound dissembler, yet severely just, and although grasping and avaricious himself, a deadly foe to peculation in his officers. To his soldiers he was particularly indulgent, and they repaid his kindness by their fidelity. In the latter years of his reign his temper, at all times peevish and dangerous, became ferocious. His countenance, which resembled that of a shrivelled old woman, assumed occasionally a horrible expression, of which he was sensible and could not endure to be looked at. Even his confidential domestics approached him trembling; and their blood curdled at the sound of his shrill dissonant voice, which was seldom raised without uttering a term of gross abuse or an order for punishment.

He frequently dwelt on the circumstances of Nadir's fate, as if harbouring a conviction that it might one day be his own; and reprobated the folly of that monarch in threatening when he should have executed, and in trusting when he should have been rigidly reserved. Yet he fell a victim to a greater imprudence than any that could be laid to the charge of his predecessor. While encamped with his army at Sheesha, the capital of Karabaug, in 1797, a dispute occurred between two of his servants, and their noise so enraged him that he commanded them to be instantly put to death. In vain did Saduk Khan Shegaghee, a nobleman of high rank, intercede for them; all he could obtain was a reprieve until next morning, as the day (Friday) being sacred to prayer he would not profane it by taking their lives. With a singular infatuation he permitted these very persons, lying under a sentence of death which they knew to be irrevocable, to attend him during this only night of their existence. Despair gave them courage, perhaps they were conscious of secret support in other quarters,—they entered the tent of his majesty while he slept, and with their daggers freed Persia from an odious tyranny and themselves from the dread of the executioner.

The firmness and temperate management of Hajji Ibrahim secured the throne to the deceased monarch's nephew, who

assumed the ensigns of royalty by the name of Futeh Ali Shah; and though Saduk Khan quitted the camp with his numerous followers, the rest of the army marched at the command of the minister to the capital, which was kept by Mirza Mohammed Khan Kujur for the heir of Aga Mohammed. Saduk made a feeble effort at opposition, but was defeated. Two similar attempts, by Hussein Kouli Khan, brother of the king, and by a son of Zukee Khan Zund, were subdued with equal facility; and since that time the internal tranquillity of the kingdom has been little disturbed.

By nature unwarlike, and succeeding to an almost undisputed throne, the reign of Futeh Ali has been marked by few remarkable events. The most important are those connected with the progress of the Russian arms, which was equally rapid and decisive. In 1800, Georgia was finally incorporated with the empire of the czar. In 1808, Mingrelia submitted to the same power,—Ganjah was taken, and Erivan invested, although the invaders were forced to raise the siege for want of stores, and from sickness. Daghistan and Shirwan had been overrun: and, in 1805, Karabaug voluntarily submitted to their sway. The tide of conquest proceeded with various fluctuations until checked by British interference; though the treaty of Goolistan, in October, 1813, fixed the boundaries so indefinitely as to give rise to much fruitless negotiation, and finally to a fresh war.

One part of the policy of the government of St. Petersburg in regard to Persia has been to acquire an influence over the heir-apparent, by promising to assist him in the struggle which is anticipated at the death of his father; and the agents of that ambitious power had actually established this dangerous ascendancy, when the threatening attitude and language adopted by the Russian authorities, no less than his regard for the British, disposed Prince Abbas Mirza to break the bonds that were fastening around him, and to trust once more to the interposition of the latter nation. This, however, as well as remonstrances from the courts of Teheran and Tabriz, having failed, the shah reluctantly resolved to seek redress for past encroachments, and a security from farther loss, by force of arms. In this measure he was supported by the unanimous voice of the religious order, who called aloud for "war against the infidels;" and many of the frontier tribes, who had been exasperated by the cruelties inflicted by the invaders, rejoiced in the prospect of revenge.

Hostilities commenced with a massacre of all the Russian detachments and garrisons which could be overpowered. And the prince-royal, in July, 1826, took the field with an army of 40,000 men, about 12,000 of whom were regulars, together with a few companies of foot-artillery, and deserters from the enemy. The Muscovite troops on the south of the Caucasus have been estimated at the same amount, including 6000 Cossacks and some dragoons. The opening of the campaign was favourable to Persia. Gokchah, Balikloo, and Aberan were recovered,—Kareklissia was evacuated,—the country ravaged almost to the gates of Tefis,—Karabaug overrun,—Sheesha taken, and its strong castle invested.

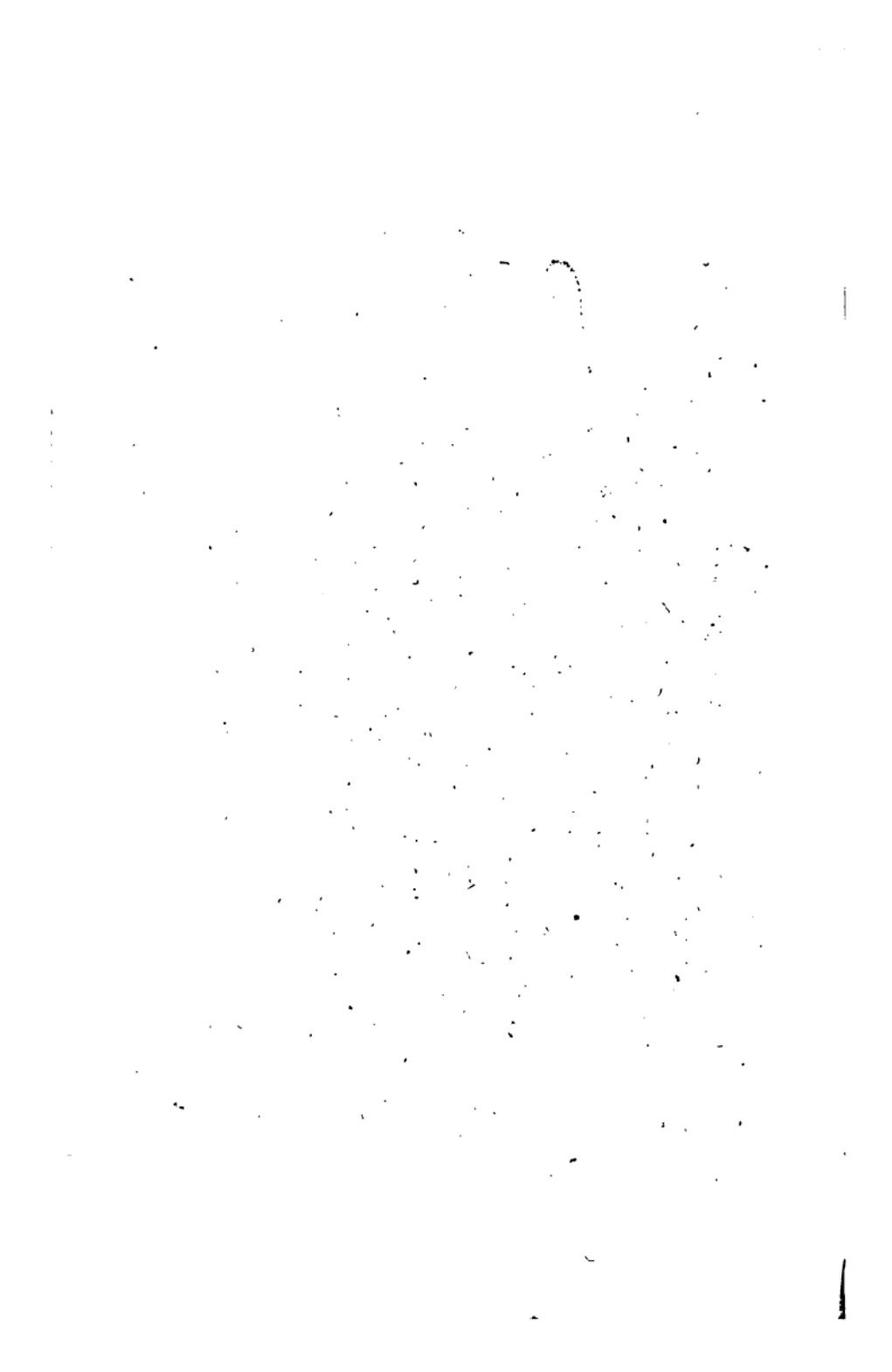
But the flattering hopes awakened by these successes were speedily dissipated. Early in September, Mohammed Mirza, son of Abbas, sustained a repulse at Shamkoor, near Ganjah; and, on the 25th of the same month, the prince himself, having rashly engaged the force under General Paskevitch in the open field, was defeated with the loss of 1200 men. He fled with a few attendants, and his army dispersed, after having plundered his own camp.

Abbas repaired to court, and by much exertion another army was collected, with which, however, nothing was effected; and during the winter several ineffectual attempts were made to accommodate matters by British mediation. The war recommenced in the spring of 1827; Erivan was invested by General Benkendorff, who, however, raised the siege on the approach of the shah towards Khoi; but the good effects of this movement were counterbalanced by a check which the prince sustained before Abbasabad, and the treacherous surrender of that town, which soon followed.

The defeat of 4000 Russian infantry and 2000 cavalry, with twenty field-pieces, at Aberan, in August, 1827, again encouraged the hopes of Abbas; but the advance of Paskevitch, with strong reinforcements and a battering train, put an end to the delusion, and the Persians had few other advantages to boast of during the continuance of the contest. In January, 1828, the king, seeing no prospect of maintaining the war with success, and anxious to avoid further loss, accepted once more the aid of the British minister at his court to procure a peace; which the enemy, who had attained many of their objects, did not now decline. The terms proposed by the latter were humiliating enough; and the inef-



Abbe Mirza.



factual remonstrances and reluctance of the shah and his ministers protracted the negotiations until the 21st February, when a treaty was signed at Turkomanshaee, of which the principal conditions were as follows :—

By the first article, the treaty of Goolistan is annulled, and a new arrangement settled. By the third article, Persia cedes the Khanat of Erivan and that of Nakshivan. By the fourth, the boundary-line is described as drawn from that of the Ottoman states, passing over the summit of Little Ararat, and down the Lower Karasu to the Aras, then proceeding in the bed of that river to Abbasabad and Yedibouloob, traversing the plain of Mogan to Adina Bazaar, ascending the current of that name to its source, and thence running along the west of the Elburz or Caucasian Mountains to the source of the Ashtara, which it follows to the sea ; thus ceding the greater part of Talish to Russia, and including all the islands of the Caspian Sea that fall within its direction. The sixth article stipulates for the payment of ten 'croses (of 500,000 each) of tomans by Persia, as indemnification for the expenses of the war ; and these are followed by a variety of provisions for the regulation of commerce, for the government of the ceded provinces, and the management of the migratory population, with other necessary precautionary clauses.

Since the signature of this treaty the peace has remained undisturbed, although an event which occurred at Teheran in February, 1829, might have furnished an excuse for further exactions. In that month, Mr. Grebayadoff, the Russian envoy at the court of the shah, and forty-four individuals belonging to his suite, fell victims to the popular phrensy, being massacred in his official dwelling. The king, equally shocked and alarmed at an outrage which he could not prevent, despatched a mission charged with an explanation to the court of St. Petersburg, which was graciously received, and harmony has since been preserved.

After the termination of this war, the prince-royal had time to attend to the interests of his future kingdom, and has made some progress in reducing the rebellious chiefs of Khorasan. Assisted by the science and valour of a Polish gentleman, who is now at the head of his army, he possessed himself of Yezd, took Toorshish and Khabooshan by storm, and reduced the other chieftains in that quarter to an acknowledgment of fealty and submission. But these, it is

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obvious, are temporary advantages that can only be maintained by a firm control, supported by a well-organized force, and directed by a judicious system of government, which are scarcely to be expected from the present royal family.

It is indeed sufficiently manifest that the downfall of the Kujur dynasty, short as their reign has been, is fast approaching, and that if the heir-apparent succeed in preserving his crown for a season, it will be more from the operation of foreign influence and political jealousy, than by the exertion of any power or popularity that he is likely to acquire. The very name of the Kujurs is detested throughout the kingdom; and it is notorious that pressing petitions have been made on the part of the greater number of the chiefs and nobles, backed by the earnest wishes of all ranks, for permission to throw themselves upon British protection; declaring that all they look for is peace and security; and protesting that, should their application be rejected, they will rather submit to Russia than continue any longer subject to the misrule and extortion of their present masters.*

CHAPTER VIII.

Resources and Government of Persia.

Persia over-estimated as a Nation—Causes of this—Roads of Persia—Population—Commerce—Exports—Imports—Sources of Revenue—Land-taxes and Tenures—Irrregular Taxes—Amount of Revenue—Expenditure—Military Resources and Establishment—Character of the Government—King absolute—Civil and Criminal Law—Vicious and improvident System of Collection—Illustrations—Character of the reigning Monarch—Duties and usual Occupations.

THE striking events which have just occupied our attention, the importance of the actors, and the imposing magnificence of the details—perplexing the imagination with countless multitudes, exhaustless wealth, and almost boundless

* The earnestness with which these overtures have been urged, arises no doubt from their knowledge of the security to property and perfect religious liberty, and protection to all orders, enjoyed by British subjects in India, contrasted with their own precarious condition.

power—naturally lead the reader to conclude that Persia must be populous, fertile, well cultivated, and abounding in every source of prosperity. Yet the reverse is the truth; and the cause of this error is neither remote nor obscure. We may trace it to the impressions our minds have received from the allusions in Holy Writ to the riches and power of the Assyrian and Median kings, with their “cohorts all gleaming in purple and gold;” from the works of those classical authors who have recorded the splendour of a Darius or a Xerxes, and the innumerable myriads whom they led to victory or to destruction; and, lastly, from the gorgeous descriptions which have delighted us in Eastern narratives, whether in prose or verse. These impressions, gaining strength by contemplating the mighty scale of conquest which characterizes the history of Asia, have undoubtedly been the means of throwing over this quarter of the globe a delusive brilliancy.

This misconception has been in no small degree strengthened by the reports of those travellers who visited Persia in the reigns of the Suftees, when that country appeared as wealthy as when her empire extended over the greater part of Asia, and who for the most part had their views directed to the more exalted orders of society,—to the persons of the sovereign and his immediate dependants, or the rich and powerful of the land, with whom their business chiefly led them to associate. Such accounts can form no just criterion for determining the condition of the country in general; for while the king was dazzling strangers by his ostentation, his subjects may have been as poor, population as scanty, and cultivation not much more extensive than at present. Besides, in estimating the power of the kingdom, it must be recollectcd that the most successful monarchs did not draw their riches from it alone, but owed them to the possession of Asiatic Turkey, to Egypt, Bactriana, Kharism, Cabul, and even to Tartary, as well as to the trade with India and China, which they either engrossed or controlled. In an account of Persia, therefore, it becomes important to point out and correct these erroneous notions. The appearance of the several provinces having been already described, we shall now proceed to examine its condition a little farther, by some of the tests which are usually applied to measure the indications of national prosperity.

Of these, one, though not perhaps the most decisive, is the state of its roads. Without good highways commerce cannot thrive, because commodities cannot be transported in any considerable quantities. In Persia it does not appear that such a convenience ever existed: art has never been applied there to the formation of roads, even in the most prosperous times. Ancient authors, it is true, mention chariots as being used in war as well as by persons of rank; but with the exception of the great causeway constructed by Shah Abbas in Mazunderan, and something of the same nature across the Caufilan Koh, which separates Irak from Azerbijan (said to have been made by the Turks while in possession of Azerbijan with the view of extending their conquests), there are no tracks calculated for such conveyances. Indeed the people, when reproached with this deficiency, and reminded of the advantages of an easy intercourse, admit the fact, but ascribe it to national policy, and argue that the best encouragement to an invading foe would be smooth paths to facilitate his march.*

A description of the route from Bushire to Shiraz,—that is, from the principal seaport of Persia to the capital of its most important southern province,—may give an idea of the general condition of such thoroughfares in that country. Leaving the former station, and crossing the Dushtistan with its huts of date-tree leaves, the traveller reaches Dalakee,† a considerable village situated at the foot of the mountains which separate the Gurmaseer, or warm climate, from the upper and colder plains. At this place commences a series of passes which cannot fail to astonish, if they do not appal, those who cross them for the first time. Of these the Cothal e Mulloo, in length about fourteen miles, is the first. A few furlongs from Dalakee the path begins abruptly to ascend a steep mountain among fragments of rock. The traveller has

* As a contrast to this Persian argument, it is curious to find the prince of a petty state in Africa, who kept his roads in good repair, assigning as a reason for it, "that an enemy would be deterred from attacking him by this display of activity."—See Family Library, No. XVI. Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in Africa.

† Speaking of Dalakee, Morier (First Journey, p. 78) says, "This place, and indeed all we had seen, presented a picture of poverty stronger than words can express. There was nothing beyond what mere existence required, nor to our very cursory observation did the most trifling superfluity present itself."

sometimes to guide his horse along the slippery surface of a projecting ledge ; at others, suddenly climbing or as rapidly descending, he must thread his way among the crevices of huge unshapely blocks hurled from lofty peaks above, and which seem placed to forbid the passage either of man or beast. The track formed by the feet of passengers, unaided in the least by art, resembles the dry bed of a torrent, and actually passes for miles among the ruins of the overhanging mountains. These assume the boldest and most fantastic shapes ; sometimes seeming ready to close overhead, at other points disclosing numerous ravines and hollows, whence occasionally trickles a salt stream to pollute the clear river. No vegetation enlivens the gray-yellow rocks except a few bushes of the wild-almond ; and the grotesque forms of the surrounding cliffs, the peaks and masses riven from the native mountain and standing forth in the pale moonlight—for, to avoid the scorching heats of day, the passage of this cothul is most commonly made by night—together with the black mysterious shadows of the deep ravines, form a picture which the traveller will not easily forget. The pass terminates in a very steep ascent on the breast of one of the highest eminences, among the fragments that have been precipitated from its brow, at a gateway through which access is gained to the plain of Khist or Konar-tucht.

The Cothul e Kumaridge, which comes next in succession, is scarcely less remarkable than that just described. Having already ascended to a considerable elevation above the plain, the mountains are not here so lofty, though scarcely less imposing, and the path winds a great part of the way along the face of a precipice, where one false step would hurl the traveller into a frightful abyss. A third very rugged and narrow track, though neither steep nor dangerous, called Teugui Toorkan, or the Turks' Defile, intervenes between Kumaridge and the valley of Kauzeroun. Eight miles beyond this point the road ascends another range of mountains by the pass of the Doochter,—a cothul so fatal to cattle that Hajji Mohammed Hussein, and his nephew Hajji Abdul Humeed, merchants whose caravans were constantly sustaining loss, improved some of the worst parts of it ; so that this formidable stage may now be passed with comparative security, though still with infinite labour. A descent from the top of this mountain leads into the plain of Abdui, which, together

with great part of the surrounding country, is sprinkled with stunted oak-trees. The last in this singular succession of defiles is the Cothul e Peera Zun, or Old Woman's Pass, which commences about four miles farther on, and continues exceedingly rugged and occasionally very steep for about seven miles, threading over one of the highest mountains in this range. Though apparently less perilous than the former cothuls, it is said there are more animals lamed and greater loss incurred here than in all the others. On looking back from the top of the Peera Zun the valley of Kauzeroun may be distinguished, with the various lines of hills which have been passed in succession, resembling huge waves of a stormy sea, pointing their bare splintered crests to the southward. A descent of about a mile leads through thin forests of oak to the fine plain of Dusht e Arjun, where there is a marshy lake of fresh water fed by natural springs, some of them of great size. From thence the road to Shiraz, although in most parts stony and otherwise impeded, is neither steep nor dangerous.

By this path all the valuable productions of India, to a very large amount, are annually conveyed to the chief marts in Persia,—and by it the returns in produce are sent to be shipped at Bushire. There are in the country many pieces of road equally bad. Indeed scarcely a day's journey can be made in any direction without encountering a mountain-pass more or less difficult. It is therefore astonishing that animals can be found capable of carrying burdens up such arduous steeps; and nothing short of the strength and persevering endurance of a Persian mule could prove equal to the task.

We shall next offer a few observations regarding the population of Persia,—a point which appears in all ages to have been very greatly misconceived. Undoubtedly there have been periods, after some unusual duration of tranquillity, when the inhabitants were much more numerous than at present; but we suspect they never amounted to the multitudes which tradition, and even history, would induce us to believe. All native information, either as regards ancient or modern times, is utterly extravagant; and the accounts of European travellers, as well as the conjectures of geographers, being wholly at variance with each other, perplex rather than elucidate the subject. Chardin estimated the

number of souls under the sway of Abbas II. at 40,000,000. It is true, that during that reign the country was blessed with peace, a commerce comparatively flourishing, and had enjoyed a long course of prosperity under the preceding Sufiavean monarchs ; but still the amount seems excessive. Pinkerton reduces the aggregate to 10,000,000, which Sir John Malcolm thinks a fair approximation to the truth ; though, after all, such conclusions rest mainly on conjectural estimates, as there are no precise data from which they can be derived. The author of these remarks, in a former work on Persia, ventured to give the numbers of a particular district, and the result shows but eight persons to a square mile, or somewhat more than 8,000,000 to the whole country. But as at least one-fourth of its whole superficies is nearly, if not totally, desert, a great deduction must be made on this account. On the other hand, the provinces bordering on the Caspian Sea, with some portions of Azerbaijan, and probably of Kurdistan, may be more thickly peopled than those parts of Fars to which the estimate applies ; so that the population, on the average during the last twenty years, may perhaps be taken at 7,000,000. To this must be added the migratory tribes of Eeliauts, of whose numbers it is impossible to form any conjecture ; but taking them at from 2,000,000 to 3,000,000, we should come, on the whole, pretty nearly to the same conclusion as Mr. Pinkerton, though on different grounds.

The smallness of this estimate, when compared with the great extent of territory, may at first appear improbable ; but when we take into account the many powerful checks to which population is subject from the caprice of a very oppressive despotism, the reader will cease to wonder at the want of inhabitants in a country which, to render it productive, would require all the encouragements bestowed by a wise and patriotic government.

The salutary influence of such a paternal sway has been frequently experienced, and there still exists evidence that some of the provinces must have formerly attained a high state of prosperity. We are told, for instance, that the district of Nishapour contained 14,000 villages, and was irrigated by 12,000 cannautes, besides eighteen natural streams ; and even to this day the place is dotted in all directions with the little mounds that indicate those subterranean canals,

and covered in every quarter with the ruins of houses. In like manner, the country around Ispahan, as well as that near Komaishah and Muxoodbeggee, taken in connexion with the towns belonging to them, show the great extent of ancient cultivation. In the time of Le Brun, the plain of Merdusht, which is watered by the Kour and Polwar, possessed at least 800 villages; the same district in 1821, according to the best information, could boast of no more than fifty-five miserable hamlets, although the numerous channels and aqueducts evince the pains once taken to render it productive. In the days of the Sufiavean sovereigns, Chardin estimated the population of Ispahan at from 600,000 to 700,000 persons; and the town of Komaishah he describes as being three miles round, full of people, and in the centre of a vast fertile territory. The inhabitants of Ispahan in 1800, according to Sir John Malcolm, did not exceed 600,000; and notwithstanding the favour it experienced from the late minister Hajji Mohammed Hussein Khan, under whose protection that district of Irak long continued, it does not probably at this day contain half as many more. Komaishah, again, can scarcely reckon 600 dwellings, and overlooks a plain covered only with the tokens of departed affluence.

Let us next turn our attention to the commerce of Persia. This has at no time been considerable; but the deficiency may be attributed to the insecurity of property rather than to any other cause; for many parts of the country abound in productions which, either in a raw or manufactured state, are valuable as exports. Besides, though individual princes have occasionally made the improvement of trade a leading object, the good faith of a single reign could never establish that confidence which had been destroyed by the acts of so many preceding tyrants. But commerce has also to contend with various natural obstacles,—the badness of the roads has been described,—navigable rivers are unknown,—and the seaports are few and unimportant. The only means of transport is on the backs of camels, mules, or small horses; hence the price of all commodities becomes greatly enhanced by the expense of carriage.

The principal raw exports are silk, cotton, tobacco, rice and grain, dried fruits, sulphur, horses, wax, and gall-nuts. The amount of the first three articles might be greatly extended, and mercantile ingenuity might devise other objects

of barter for foreign productions. Of manufactured goods Persia sends out only a few,—almost entirely to Russia,—consisting of a considerable quantity of silk and cotton stuffs, with some gold and silver brocade. The principal commercial intercourse is maintained with the empire just mentioned, as well as with Turkey, Bagdad, Arabia, the Uzbecks and Turkomans on their northern frontier, and India. In dealing with all these countries, except the last, the balance of trade, as it is called, is in favour of Persia, and the excess in the value of her exports is returned in ducats, dollars, German crowns, and silver roublés. But though this influx of the precious metals occasions a plentiful circulation, the specie is quickly transported to India, in return for the large surplus produce brought thence annually, either by way of Bushire and Congoon, or of Cabul, to Herat and Yezd, and destined to supply the demand in the countries towards the west. This occasions, indeed, a transit-trade, which is of course maintained with advantage; yet, on the whole, the commerce of the country is very limited for its extent, as the reader will discover from the few facts we have it in our power to place before him.

In the year ending May 31, 1821, the whole amount of exports from Persia to India at the port of Bushire, according to official reports, was stated at about	£305,000
That from Balfroosh, the great commercial mart on the Caspian Sea, is estimated by the merchants there to be annually about £215,000; but, in order to include the whole remaining exports from Ghilan and Mazunderan, let it be stated at	250,000
Allow for exports from the smaller ports on the Persian Gulf, including the islands,	10,000
The commerce with Bagdad, which is considerable, particularly in silk, of which 12,000 mauns shahee is sent thither, may be taken at	200,000
That with the rest of Turkey, including a similar quantity of silk,	200,000
That with Teflis and Georgia,	200,000
The exports to Bokhara and the states to the eastward,	50,000
That with Arabia,	10,000
	<hr/>
	£1,225,000

Thus we have a sum under a million and a quarter sterling to represent the total amount of exports from this great country, including the trade already mentioned from India; nor can we, in existing circumstances, hope to witness any

great increase. Under a liberal and steady government, the demand would rapidly augment for productions of every kind, but especially for those which Britain can best supply. English cloths, muslins, calicoes, silks, hardware, and other articles are already sought after to an extent only limited by the means of the purchasers.*

The value of imported goods is of course measured by that of the exports, deducting the amount of specie; for Persia, having no mines of the precious metals, receives them, like other foreign products, by barter; and the extent of that supply may be estimated by the quantity annually sent to India. In the year ending 31st May, 1821, the official return of gold and silver shipped from Bushire for India was 34,17,994 new Bombay rupees, equal to about 290,000L of sterling money. But many of the equivalent commodities are conveyed to the westward, whence they return in the shape of specie, with large profit. It is said, that about the time in question (1821) at least 300,000 golden ducats were annually brought into Tabriz by the Tefis merchants alone. A considerable amount in ducats and manets, or silver roubles, is also imported from Astracan; and the expenses of the Russian mission are defrayed by remittances of the same coins; besides which, a large value of French and German crowns and Spanish dollars is received from Bagdad for goods. Thus a considerable stream of the precious metals flows into Persia; and though the greater proportion passes on to the eastward, there still remains a sufficient quantity to form the currency of the country, to supply the treasury, and furnish the hoards of a few rich individuals throughout the kingdom. Of the gold, much continues to circulate in the shape of ducats, while the rest is converted into tomans. The silver is all coined into reals, the manets being current only in the districts bordering on Turkey and the Russian frontiers.

From what has been said, the reader will be prepared to hear that the financial receipts of the Persian empire bear as little proportion to its vast territorial extent as do its commerce and population. To obtain correct information on

* At the time these notes were taken, the silks and printed cottons of France were fully as much in demand; but the late improvements in our silk manufactures would secure us a sufficient share of the trade, if not a decided preference.

this subject is by no means easy. We shall, nevertheless, endeavour to make an estimate of the shah's revenues during the last ten or twelve years. The principal sums arise from the regular taxes, termed *mâleyaut*; from the irregular, or *saaderat*; from the amount of annual presents, fines, and confiscations; and, finally, from the rents of crown lands and buildings. In the first are comprised all imposts on land and cattle; capitation-taxes; transit-duties; and customs on merchandise. The second includes all exactions of an irregular or occasional description, not recognised as customary by the law of the land. The other two explain themselves.

It may be proper here to describe the rights of proprietors in their landed possessions; the grounds on which they are held being of four descriptions:—

- 1st, Khalissa, or crown lands.
- 2d, Those which belong to private individuals.
- 3d, Those granted to charitable or religious institutions.
- 4th, Those granted by the king for military service, or in payment of salaries or annuities.

All these tenures, except the last, afford to the proprietor, not being himself the occupant, the privilege of demanding from the cultivator one-tenth of the produce; the assignee of crown lands possessing a claim for three-tenths, which includes all government dues, and what he can get from the farmers. If the assignment be upon the estate of another, he can only demand two-tenths, being his own and the government dues. The rights of proprietors of land, upon whatsoever tenure,—inheritance, purchase, or gift from the crown,—have in all circumstances been regarded as sacred. And if any man reclaims waste ground by means of irrigation, he acquires a title to it as valid as if it had been bought. By the law of property, the privileges of farmers and villagers are equally well protected; so that the landholder is prevented from oppressing them, or exacting more than legally belongs to him.

In former times the land-tax was one-tenth part of the gross produce, and no other claim was made upon the ryot. But as the expenses of government, or the cupidity of the sovereign increased, the irregular taxes were gradually instituted. Cattle were the first objects of this fiscal innovation; and duties of various sorts were afterward imposed,

and increased so much that they were compounded for by the payment of another tenth of the gross produce. Thus the regular demands of the government extended to one-fifth ; but faith on the part of the sovereign has been so ill kept, that the saaderaut, though no longer assuming their original form, are still levied, and form the heaviest burden on the people. Thus live-stock, included as we have just seen in the compromise, are still subjected to a separate impost ; and that the Eeliauts always paid this is highly probable, as they have little other property than their flocks and herds.

The rates of capitation-taxes vary greatly. Armenians, Jews, and Ghebres especially, are heavily taxed. Shops and bazaars are also liable for a duty proportioned to their size and the manner in which they are occupied, while the tenant of such places also pays according to the nature and extent of his business. On all merchandise coming either by sea or land into the Persian dominions, a payment of about five per cent. is exigible. But there are many other custom-houses at which the same articles in their subsequent progress are subjected to similar charges ; and it has been calculated that goods consigned from Trebizond to Ispahan would have to pay ten Persian imposts before being brought to the regular market.

Of the amount of the saaderaut, it is impossible to speak with any degree of precision. Every extraordinary outlay is included under this head. The expenses of moving troops ; for transporting the king's equipage, baggage, or presents ; for furnishing supplies to the military ; the travelling-charges of members of the royal family, government-messengers, foreign ambassadors, and strangers ; repairs of roads, public buildings,—and every possible description of expenditure, from that incurred by the governor of a province down to the ketkhoda of a village,—are charged against the amount payable by each district into the treasury, and should be so admitted in the adjustment of accounts. But this is very rarely done ; and even when such an adjustment is allowed, the ryot is seldom benefited by it, as the sum remitted generally finds its way into the coffers of the ministers.

It would be equally difficult to estimate the income realized from gifts, fines, and confiscations. But when it is stated, that there are periods of the year when every one who is

admitted to the sovereign's presence is expected to appear before him with a donation, and that on the Eed e No Roz, or New-Year's day, his majesty receives 1,200,000 tomans, some idea may be formed of the productiveness of this branch of finance. Having so far explained the various sources of revenue, we shall lay before the reader a table, made out according to the best information, of the nett amount drawn from each province :—

	Tomans.	Tomans
From Fars, collected at least	300,000	
Disbursed in the province	<u>150,000</u>	
 Sent to the royal treasury		150,000
From Kerman sent a small sum, say		50,000
From Mekran little or nothing.		
From Khorasan nothing; it costs money to maintain it.		
From that portion of Irak which was under the Sudraneen's government		500,000
From Nahavund, Boorojird, Khonsar, Korrumabad, petty governments, nothing.		
From Senna in Kurdistan a little, say		30,000
From the government of Casbin, Cashan, and Zenjan, very little		30,000
From the government of Yezd, about		54,000
From Azerbaijan nothing; it costs money.		
From Mazunderan little; it furnishes the greater part of the army, in lieu of revenue		15,000
From Ghilan, collected	200,000	
Less, allowed the prince's expenses	<u>40,000</u>	
 From Kermanshah nothing.		160,000
 Probable amount from land revenues		989,000
Add probable amount of contingent receipts, presents, fines, &c. &c.		<u>1,500,000</u>
 Irakee tomans		2,489,000

This sum does not greatly exceed a million and a half sterling money, and forms, if our data be accurate, the whole cash receipts which enter the Persian treasury.

Against this income must be placed the expenses of the royal family and harem, the cost of kheluts or dresses of honour, and the value of presents; the salaries of such officers as may not be provided for in the expenditure of the local governments; and the payment of the ghulams or household troops. The king has 300 wives; for it is understood that, notwithstanding the Mohammedan law restricting the number, he marries every female with whom he chooses to

connect himself. These, with their separate allotments of slaves, eunuchs, and other attendants of the household, must swell the charge to a formidable amount ; and besides, there is his majesty's personal establishment, which is said to be numerous and respectable ; the royal stud ; the baggage-cattle, and all the immense detail of the royal marching-train ; the repair of buildings, and furniture ; with a multitude of other items, which, though much may be furnished free of immediate outlay, and all with a due regard to economy, must form a serious drain upon the imperial purse. If what has been said be duly considered, and if allowance be made for contingencies and defalcations, we may safely conclude that the free revenue of Persia is extremely small, and that its sovereign, whatever may be his desire to accumulate, can scarcely amass any considerable treasure.

We must next look to the military strength and resources of that country. At the time when Chardin wrote, which was in the days of the great Abbas, the martial spirit which had animated the nation was almost extinct for want of exercise ; and with it had sunk much of the real power of the empire. Still there was kept up a large force,—a sort of standing army, which had in fact been only established by that great prince. Previously to his reign there were no troops immediately paid by the crown, but each province supplied a fixed number of horsemen, which either were or were not effective, according to the genius of the sovereign and the consequent demand for their services. Besides these, there was the registered militia of the country, which constituted a very uncertain body, either as regarded discipline or numerical strength. Shah Ismael possessed no other materials than these for his extensive conquests ; but his abilities compensated for all disadvantages. Abbas, observing the benefit which the Turks derived from their janizaries, with the view of opposing them effectually, as well as to counterbalance the dangerous power of the Kuzzilbash chiefs, raised two corps ; one consisting of 12,000 foot-soldiers, who, from the arms they used, were called tuffunchees or musketeers ; the other comprehending a like number of cavalry. Both were regularly disciplined, and paid by the crown.

In Chardin's time these troops were still maintained ; and besides them a force of about 1200 gholams, on whom the sovereigns of Persia have at all times placed great reli-

ance. There were also two smaller regiments of guards ; one consisting of 200 men called the Suffees, instituted by Sheik Suffee as body-guards in chief ; and the zeiziarees, 600 strong, enrolled by Abbas II. This prince disbanded an artillery corps of 12,000 men, which had been raised by his great progenitor. These were all paid as formerly by the government. The other military force was composed of the Courchees, otherwise called Kuzzilbashes (or Redheads, from the peculiar cap they wore), who were considered as regular soldiers, and also of the irregular militia. The former were cavalry, furnished by the chiefs of tribes for grants of land in proportion to the number of their retainers. They were commanded by the heads of their own clans, and would obey no other : they received a small annual pay, with provisions for horse and man while on service, and were hardy, robust, active, very efficient in predatory warfare, and in some points exactly resembling the Parthians, whose descendants they were. Their number in the early years of Shah Abbas amounted to 80,000 ; but the power of their leaders became so formidable, that he saw proper to check it by means of the regular corps we have described. The Courchees were reduced to 30,000, at which force they remained during the visit of Chardin.

The militia were enrolled from among all denominations of the people ; they provided their own arms and clothing, and were maintained by their respective provinces or villages, receiving, when on service, a small pay from the public purse. They had no pretensions to discipline, obeyed only their own officers ; and were in fact rather a species of police than a body of regular soldiers. Besides these several classes, whose profession is arms, every man carries weapons ; so that the whole male population may be called into action by a warlike sovereign.

In fact, the military force of Persia, like that of all Eastern monarchies, has ever varied, both in numbers and in quality, with the character of the reigning monarch. Thus the troops of Shah Ismael, who had many formidable enemies to contend with, became almost invincible ; and the sight of his Kuzzilbashes struck terror into the Ottoman squadrons. A similar necessity produced similar results under the sway of the great Abbas ; which, again, being united with a restless spirit of conquest, raised the glory of the Persian arms to its

utmost height, and depressed the nation to the lowest misery, under the ambitious Nadir. His soldiers feared the frown of their leader more than the enemy's sword, and the dread of death was overlooked, if not despised, by all who followed him.

The same familiarity with arms and danger continued throughout the troubles which succeeded the murder of that prince ; and the merciless but politic Aga Mohammed Khan never spared his men in the day of need, nor suffered any relaxation of discipline. But he was aware of the strong points of Asiatic warfare, and employing the tactics of his Parthian ancestors, he successfully opposed more regular troops. While in Khorasan, this monarch was informed that the Russians had invaded his western frontier. He assembled his nobles ; declared his resolution to march against the enemy ; "and my valiant warriors," he added, "shall, by the blessing of God, charge their celebrated lines of infantry, and batteries of cannon, and cut them to pieces with their conquering sabres!" All the chiefs were loud in their applause, and vowed to support him with their lives. When the assembly broke up, the king, turning to Hajji Ibrahim, demanded whether he marked what had been said ? The minister replied that he had. "And think you that I will do what I told them?"—"Undoubtedly, if it is your majesty's pleasure."—"Hajji," said the king, half angry, "have I been mistaken? are you also a fool? Can a man of your wisdom believe I will ever run my head against their walls of steel, or expose my irregular army to be destroyed by their cannon and disciplined troops? No, I know better. Their shot shall never reach me. But they shall possess no country beyond its range ; they shall not know sleep ; and let them march where they choose, I will surround them with a desert."

To the usual irregular troops this monarch only added some unwieldy cannon, and a number of swivel-artillery, mounted on camels and called zumboorucks (little wasps),—a name very expressive of their sharp mischievous effect.

During the present reign, which has been comparatively peaceful, although the warlike spirit has fled, and left to the troops of Persia only the name of soldiers, an attempt was made to introduce a more effective discipline, and even to organize a regular force on European principles. The signal

failure of the experiment arose, not from any deficiency on the part of the men, but from peculiarities in the national habits, and from the indisposition or inability of government to incur the requisite expense. This force was confined to Azerbaijan, and was entirely a creation of Abbas Mirza, who commanded in that province. In the year 1822 the particulars were as follows, and it is believed that no material alteration has taken place :—

1	Grenadier battalion of Russian prisoners or deserters, from		800 to 1000
11	Battalions of from 600 to 800 men each, under various names		8400
1	Regiment of lancers, Afghans		500
1	Corps mounted artillery, about		640
1	Troop of camel-artillery		100
15	Corps.	Men,	10,640
	At Erivan, on the frontiers, under command of the Sirdar,		
	Husseia Khan,* there is		
1	Battalion of regular troops		1000
1	Corps of reserve, little better than common Toffunchees, but wearing uniform		3000
17	Corps of regulars.	Men,	13,640
	Being the amount of regular forces in Azerbaijan.		
	Irregulars.—		
	Toffunchees, to be mustered at Tabriz		10,000
	Cavalry of the tribes		12,000
	Kurdish horse, about		2000
	Inferior Cavalry, about		1500
	Inferior Infantry, about		3500
	Amount of forces in Azerbaijan,		42,640
	In an extreme case there might be a further muster of men capable of bearing arms		8000
	Total,†		50,640

Such is the amount of the grand army placed at the disposal of Abbas Mirza to defend the frontiers against the Russians. But the effective force was never so great ; and the prince, when he took the field against the Turks in 1822, could barely muster 35,000 men, including a large proportion

* A chief of some talent and still greater pretensions,—very hasty, and almost independent, who lived at Erivan, and had charge of the frontiers.

† The materials of this sketch were derived from British officers resident on the spot in 1822, and cannot be otherwise than correct as to that period.

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of inferior troops. The artillery is well mounted and equipped, but the arsenal is deficient in all sorts of stores. In the campaign now alluded to, the gunners are said to have marched with not more than twenty-five rounds of ammunition made up for each piece; and the other preparations in the ordnance and military departments were on a scale still more limited.

When the design of forming these regular corps was first contemplated, English officers were invited by the Persian government, and appointed to discipline them; and while they were thus commanded, the troops on several occasions behaved with much steadiness. But no sooner did the peace with Russia take place than the soldiers, from parsimonious motives, were permitted to return to their homes, on the understanding of reassembling whenever they should be required; and the higher orders remained useless appendages at court. On the commencement of the war with Turkey, as British officers could not serve against a friendly nation, they were almost all dismissed, leaving only a few sergeants to manœuvre the horse-artillery. With the exception, however, of the Muscovite deserters, that was the only serviceable part of Abbas Mirza's establishment; for the regimented troops, though better armed, were scarcely in other respects superior to the common surbauze or foot-soldiers of the provinces.

The rest of the military force is maintained on the ancient footing. The cavalry furnished by the chiefs of tribes still continues good, although greatly degenerated.* A proportionate deterioration has occurred in the regular militia; their equipment is bad, and little reliance can be placed on them. Some provinces, however, send forth better irregular infantry than others. Mazunderan, for instance, and Astrabad, the original seat of the Kujurs, pay the principal part of their assessment in this sort of military service, maintaining 12,000

* "Where," exclaimed an old officer of Agh Mohammed Shah, "where are now those warriors whom I have seen raise their arms, rush, without once looking at the battery before them, and cut the gunners down at their posts? Where are the men who would spur at their king's command upon inevitable death, because they feared it not, or dreaded their master's anger yet more, and knew the reward was as certain as the punishment? But now *this* king, who is never found in a place where he can witness courageous conduct, if a man risks horse and life, and loses the first, he makes him a present of a toman!"

toffunchees, and 4000 cavalry. These are supposed to be always ready for actual service, though they are quietly dispersed among their own villages ; and as only eight tomans a-year are allowed to each horseman, and a proportionately small pittance to the foot-soldiers, it is scarcely to be expected that they should keep themselves in an efficient state of preparation.

Nevertheless, when the king does take the field, he is said, in one way or other, to make up a numerical force of 100,000 fighting-men, which, by means of camp-followers, may be doubled and even trebled, to the excessive annoyance and loss of the districts through which they pass. In fact, they are always more formidable to friends than to foes, and the royal visits to Khorasan, which at one period were made every two or three years, were dreaded more than an incursion of the Turkomans or Uzbecks.* Instead of the hardy veterans who served under Nadir and Aga Mohammed, they may be described as a lawless banditti, who shun the face of an enemy, and think only of plunder and peculation. The present king has taken every possible step to crush the martial spirit which he found existing on his accession to the throne. He reached the royal honours over the bodies of his relations and of the powerful nobles, whom the uncle destroyed that the nephew might reign in peace.† Nurtured in the school of suspicion, he cannot witness energy in his officers without alarm ; and this is so well known, that no chief dares to be brave, lest it should prove the signal of disgrace or destruction.

The government of Persia has always been an absolute monarchy. The sovereign's word is law ; the life and prop-

* Cochoon or Khabooshan, the dwelling of Reza Kouli Khan, a Kurdish chief, was a particular object of the king's displeasure. On one occasion the royal army sat down before this place, which is only defended by a mud wall, flanked with plenty of towers and a ditch ; but they effected nothing except ravaging the country and firing an occasional shot into the town, by which it is averred the utmost injury done was to kill a dog and frighten an old woman. One day a large gun was brought forward to intimidate the townspeople, but only three balls answering its bore could be procured : two were fired in the hope of making the desired impression, and a thundering summons followed ; but the only result was a request that his majesty "would fire his third ball and be done, and leave them alone in peace."

† It was a common exclamation of Aga Mohammed, on the perpetration of any new murder,—"How much blood have I been forced to shed, that this boy," the present king, "may reign in peace!"

erty of his subjects, from the highest to the lowest, are in his hand ; and in exercising this power he is liable to no control, except the fear of exciting rebellion or provoking assassination. It is, therefore, the feeble who suffer most, while the bold and the strong find means for their own protection.

Equally paramount is the authority of the king in his own family ; and although the custom of the tribes from which his majesty is sprung disposes him to recognise in the son of his legitimate wife the successor to his crown, yet, if he choose, he may nominate the offspring of a slave, and secure the kingdom from civil broils after his own decease by depriving of sight, or putting to death, the whole of his progeny except the heir-apparent. In the days of the Suffees such was often the practice. The present ruler has pursued a different system ; but whether it may prove a more merciful one in the end must be determined by events.

The shah is thus, in fact, the government,—the nation. All are his servants,—his slaves ; to be raised into affluence and favour at his pleasure,—to be degraded and destroyed at his caprice, without remonstrance or appeal. “There,” said Futeh Ali one day to the British envoy, in conversing on the difference between a king in England and in Persia ; “There stand Solyman Khan Kujur and several more of the first chiefs of the empire ; I can cut off all their heads if I please. Can I not ?” added he, addressing them. “Assuredly, Kibleh Allum ! (Point of the World’s Adoration !) if it is your pleasure.”—“Now that is real power,” said his majesty, turning to the envoy. “But,” added he, “it has no permanence : my sons, when I am gone, will fight for the crown, and it will fall into the hands of the best soldier.” And the shah was right. Secure on the throne, an able sovereign furnishes the spirit that pervades every part of his dominions ; but at his death he is probably succeeded by a prince bred in the harem, and taken thence, utterly inexperienced, to enter on the duties of government. The father’s arrangements may, for a while, preserve the son from ruin ; but as effeminity, profligacy, and oppression increase, discontent and rebellion arise,—the fabric totters and falls, to be raised again into dignity by some new and hardy conqueror ;—and thus each dynasty, in rapid succession, “follows the common law, —the unceasing round of valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy, and decay.”

Yet, unlimited as the will of a Persian king may appear, there are few who are more controlled by the pressure of affairs. Not only has he to watch against the diminution of his power by external aggression or internal usurpation, but he must sedulously discharge the more pacific duties, of which the most important is the distribution of justice.

The civil and criminal law of all Mohammedan nations is well known to be founded on the precepts of the Koran and the traditions (or Sonna) : that is, the oral commentaries and sayings of the immediate successors of the Prophet.* This, called the Sherrah or written law, is the rule in all regular courts, where persons of the ecclesiastical order preside. But in Persia there is also the Urf or customary law, which is administered by secular magistrates having the king as their head. The respective powers and privileges of these two branches of the judicature have always been matter of dispute ; and the point of precedence, or rather of preponderance, has varied with the character and disposition of the sovereign ; those of a strongly religious bias being inclined to refer all cases to the Sherrah, while others would vest the chief authority in the secular tribunals.

The Sheik al Islam is the supreme judge in the Sherrah courts, although the great influence possessed by the Mooshteheds or chief pontiffs, to whose superior knowledge deference is always paid, might warrant their being considered as higher still. In every town there is such a sheik nominated by the king, with a salary ; and in the larger cities there is also a cauzee, who has the further aid of a council of mollahs.

The Urf is administered by his majesty in person, by his lieutenants, the rulers of provinces, governors of cities, magistrates of towns, collectors of districts, and all the officers who act under them. All these are competent to hear causes and complaints, summon evidence, give decisions, and inflict punishment, according to their respective rank. And as the customary law is more arbitrary than the written, these judgments are more summary, and generally enforced with corresponding vigour. There is, however, an appeal to the superior functionaries ; and it is this alone which controls the venality of the lower judges. Still the power of life and death rests with the king, who seldom delegates it, except to

* The Sheiks exclude those of the three first caliphs, as being the personal enemies of Ali.

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princes of the blood-royal or to governors of remote provinces.

The courts are held in public, and the monarch sits a certain time each day, in his hall of audience, to receive petitions and decide such cases as come before him.

According to the Koran, a thief is liable to mutilation; but mercy may be exercised, if the injured party be disposed to forgiveness. Murder is a capital crime; but may also be compounded for with the heir of the deceased, to whom the perpetrator is delivered to be dealt with at his pleasure. In the same manner personal assaults are generally compromised; but if not, the *lex talionis*, or rule of "an eye for an eye," or "a tooth for a tooth," may be enforced. Other delinquencies are punished according to custom and precedent, at the discretion of the judge. Death is commonly inflicted by strangling, decapitation, or stabbing; in more extreme cases, impalement, tearing asunder by horses or by the bent boughs of trees, and other cruel or frightful modes of execution, have been adopted. Tortures are seldom applied, unless to compel the discovery of concealed treasure. The barbarous practice of putting out the eyes generally atones for political offences, and where the sufferer either has aspired to sovereign power, or is supposed likely to do so. But every page of Persian history abounds with horrid and disgusting instances of the abuse of torments and mutilation.

To superintend the administration of the Urif is one of the most important offices of the king. Yet in a despotism so absolute, when the character of the monarch must form that not only of the government but of the nation, much more is requisite; and it is to be feared that in no respect is the influence of the present sovereign beneficially exerted. Contemplating Persia neither with the eye of a patriot nor of a father, but rather as a property held in lease of uncertain duration, his only concern is how to make the most of his incumbency. He treats it as his conquest, and not as his country; and his aim is to combine the two objects of breaking down the power of all those chiefs who, under an able sovereign, should form the strength of the empire; and of converting that power to his own aggrandizement. The governments of all the principal provinces have been bestowed upon members of his own family; and there is scarcely a petty district which is not in the hands of one of its branches or connexions. Pursuing the usual policy of his predeces-

sors, he has filled the most important offices of state with persons of low rank, who possess good abilities or have recommended themselves by flattery and presents. All his ministers are men of this description ; and thus he has covered the empire with a network of royal influence, which for the present throws much power into his hands, but is pregnant with the seeds of civil war and bloodshed. Family bonds rarely withstand the assaults of ambition ; and these ties among the great are easily annihilated. The aim of all the princes is to secure a treasure for the anticipated struggle at their father's death,—that of the parent to provide, at the public expense, for the actual maintenance of his children, and to make them collectors for his own coffers. In one thing their object is the same,—to wring tribute from the people in every possible way. The king fixes a sum to be remitted from each province, and this is rigidly exacted, independently of all fines or extraordinary demands. Governors, therefore, force their agents to find the money ; these last are equally peremptory with the collectors of districts, who, again, press the zabuts and ketkhodahs of villages, while they in turn grind the ryots. Each of these officers raises as much beyond the sum required as will leave something in his own hands : thus dishonestly enriching himself, to be robbed whenever the arch-despot at the head of affairs shall deem it expedient.

This system of extortion is by no means checked during its progress. The monarch has tolerably good information, or at all events a shrewd guess, of what goes on ; and no interruption is offered until the coffers of a noble are sufficiently replenished, when speedily, by false accusation, fine, imprisonment, or torture, his majesty appropriates the amount to himself. Some of the methods adopted to accomplish this would sound strangely in European ears. When an officer of state falls under displeasure, or, in other words, has excited the royal cupidity, the culprit is frequently put up for sale,—his price being fixed at the sum required of him. In this way Aga Mohammed Shah disposed of his minister Mirza Shuffea, in open court, to Hajji Ibrahim, his rival. In like manner the reigning monarch, as is known to the writer of this work, exposed to sale a respectable mirza, whom he charged with embezzlement, threatening to put him to death instantly if a specific ransom were not obtained. The murder

was prevented by the pledge of a high officer present, and the affair was compromised by a heavy fine, which was all that was ever intended.

The condition of a province is rarely inquired into until the revenue begins to fail, or the cry of distress deepens into the mutterings of disaffection. The smallest expense in the way of public improvement is avoided; or, if a benefaction be resolved on, the district or town where the money is to be laid out is sure to be made answerable for it. Even the palaces and royal gardens, in various parts of the country, are not unfrequently suffered to fall into decay; for no fund adequate to their maintenance has ever been provided. Should a mine be discovered, or a canal required, individuals are left to undertake such operations, for the sovereign will do nothing; while, if the adventurers should succeed, there is every probability that the concern will be wrested from them, unless they submit to such exactions as government may think fit to impose. Even tradesmen dread the attainment of celebrity in their vocations, lest they become objects of attention to the king or his family.*

The only speculations prosecuted to any extent are commercial. The wants of men must be reciprocally supplied; and even in Persia merchants experience a share of that protection which is everywhere extended to them. In such adventures both king and nobles engage,—the former largely, and doubtless with no small advantages. Their wealth being less tangible, and evasion more easy, traders often escape arbitrary impositions, but they are by no means exempt from persecution. An acquaintance of the writer of these pages, while he lodged in a certain town, was alarmed by hearing,

* A native of Fars, some time ago, made a considerable improvement in the manufacture of porcelain. His fame quickly spread until it reached the court, when the king immediately despatched an order, commanding him to repair to Teheran to make china for the shah. Now the poor fellow knew, that, once there, he would have to make china not only for the shah, but for all his officers and courtiers,—and that, too, without the hope of any payment, unless it might be an occasional good beating. Seized with consternation, he collected as large a sum as possible, and, presenting it by way of bribe to the minister, besought him to report that he was not the man who made the china, but that the real potter had run away. The business was managed according to his wish, and he returned penniless to his own country, vowing never again to make a bit of china, nor to attempt an improvement of any sort, as long as he lived.

In a neighbouring house, a sort of periodical punishment going on daily. Heavy blows were given; and a person was continually crying out, "Amaur! Amaun! (mercy! mercy!) I have nothing! Heaven is my witness, I have nothing!" Upon inquiry, he learned that the sufferer was a merchant, reputed to be very rich, who afterward confessed to him, that having understood the governor of the place was determined to have a share of his wealth, and expecting to be put to the torture, he had resolved to habituate himself to the endurance of pain, in order to be able to resist the threatened demands. He had brought himself to bear 1000 strokes of a stick, and as he was able to counterfeit great exhaustion, he hoped to be able to bear as many blows as they would venture to inflict, short of death, without conceding any of his money.

The character of the reigning monarch may in a great part be comprehended from what has been related of his government. He succeeded his uncle, Aga Mohammed, in 1798: he was then forty years of age. The preceding twenty had been passed under the shadow of his powerful predecessor. His earlier youth, through the tolerance of Kureem Khan,* had been spent in ease in Mazunderan. His mind, therefore, has not been strengthened in the school of adversity, nor was it naturally of a very vigorous description. Viewing him as a child of fortune, habituated to the exercise of uncontrolled power, his dispositions are little open to censure. For a Persian sovereign, he is neither considered cruel nor unjust. He is sincere in his religious professions, a good father, temperate, and unstained with the disgusting debaucheries that disgrace so many of his subjects. He is by no means remarkable for personal courage, nor can he lay any claim to generosity. He is said to be distinguished in private by elegant manners; and to possess many accomplishments, that of poetry being one. Others insinuate that he is deficient in talent, and quite unfit to be the ruler of such a

* After the successful struggle of Kureem for the throne, when hostages were brought from the families of his opponents, Baba Khan, then quite a child, was one of those sent from the Kujar tribe. The king, it is said, looked at him once or twice with great interest, and at length exclaimed, "Why have you brought that boy? I have no business with him—his head is made for a crown—send him home to his mother." He presented him with a khelut, horses, and attendants, and dismissed him to Mazunderan.

nation, where he could not have maintained his throne a day, had it not been for the policy of his uncle and the peculiar circumstances of surrounding countries.

But the ruling passion of Futeh Ali Shah is an insatiable desire of accumulating wealth, which has proved more injurious to his kingdom than all the efforts of his enemies, and we have already seen to what miserable expedients he stoops to gratify it. His avarice is in fact the jest as well as the bane of the people. If a fruit or a sweetmeat come early in season, he sends a portion to his favourites, who are obliged to acknowledge the honour by a valuable return, besides rewarding the messenger. He one day made 1500 tomans in this way, out of a rupee which he found by accident, and with which he purchased apples to distribute in these costly presents. He has a practice also of inveigling his courtiers into bets about his shooting, in which he is sure to gain ; for not only is he an excellent marksman, but the attendants take care, by cutting the throats of the sheep at which he has fired, to protect their sovereign's fame and his purse at the same time.

The most degrading of his expedients to amass money is that of selling his daughters, and even his wives, to individuals, generally of noble rank, for large sums, and assuredly not always with the consent of either party. To divorce a wife for the purpose of selling her is directly contrary to the spirit of the Mohammedan law ; yet the king, though professing himself an orthodox Mussulman, has been guilty of this scandal more than once, and has fastened a spouse on some unfortunate man, who was forced to pay a large sum for an incumbrance which he was most earnestly desirous to avoid.

The darkest stains on this monarch's character, however, are the murder of his uncle Saduk, and his ungrateful conduct to his old zealous minister Hajji Ibrahim. The assassination of his relative might have been defended on the stern necessity of state policy ; but that could not palliate the treachery and cruelty which accompanied the act. Saduk Khan, unable to struggle with his nephew, had surrendered, on a sacred promise that he should not be put to death. The king confined his victim in a room, built up the doors and windows, and left him to die by inches—conceiving this to be no violation of his oath. When the apartment was opened,

it was discovered that the miserable captive had dug deep in the floor with his hand, and swallowed the clay to assuage the pangs of hunger.

The value of Hajji Ibrahim's services had been appreciated by Aga Mohammed Khan, and by the mother of the present king; but when the country was thoroughly settled, and that princess died, her son listened to accusations fabricated by the enemies of the minister, which the open and candid manner of the latter enabled them to colour with some semblance of probability. Despising their machinations, he took no measures for security, and was accordingly degraded and condemned to lose his eyes. Some expressions, reflecting on the king's injustice, which escaped him during the cruel operation, being reported to his majesty, the old hajji was further sentenced to have his tongue cut out : he died under the torture, and his sons and brothers were included in the proscription. They were all seized, in the same hour, their property confiscated, and themselves deprived of life, or of their eyes ! Their supposed wealth was a powerful incentive to this iniquitous procedure.*

We shall terminate this chapter with a short account of the manner in which princes of the blood are brought up, and of the personal duties and private occupations of the shah. In the days of the Suffees the offspring of the king were immured in the harem, where their education was intrusted to women and eunuchs; and until the death of the reigning monarch his successor was seldom known. Nothing can be imagined less calculated to form the mind of a prince on whom the happiness of millions was to depend. The Turkish sovereigns have followed a different, and, so far as it goes, a more judicious system. The royal youths do not remain in the harem beyond the period during which female attendance and maternal care are necessary. As they are early taught the forms of religion, at three or four years of age they can repeat a few short prayers, and are perfect in the gestures and genuflexions of Mohammedan worship. Great attention is paid to their observance of external decorum, and the degrees of respect they are bound to pay to

* Yet some writers have represented this monarch as "kind-hearted," "not cruel," "mild in his rule," &c. &c. It is said he has since been touched with remorse for this abominable and wholesale murder. We sincerely hope it is true.

every individual from the king downwards; as also to the modes of standing, sitting, and retiring in the presence of a superior; insomuch, that before attaining seven or eight years, they are often as perfect in manners, and as grave in their deportment at a public assembly, as the oldest person present. At this period they begin to learn Arabic and Persian, to read the Koran, and to be instructed in the fundamental tenets of the national faith. The Sheah doctrines are instilled into their minds, and an orthodox hatred of all Sonnees. When this has been accomplished, Persian books are placed in their hands, and they are conducted through a course of grammar, logic, sacred law, and philosophy; acquiring generally but a very superficial acquaintance with any of these sciences. Their training to martial sports and athletic exercises is better attended to, and more successful; and even at seven or eight they ride with grace and boldness. Long previous to their arriving at manhood they are betrothed, and even married; nor is it unusual for them to be the fathers of large families before they reach the age of twenty. At a much earlier period they are allowed to become their own masters, always paying the deference of a son and of a subject to their father; and their future mode of life depends thenceforth on their respective characters.

The duties of religion oblige the king to rise early. Sleeping in his private apartment, where no other male can enter, his attendants are women or eunuchs, who, on his rising, assist him to dress. He then sits an hour in the hall of his harem, where he holds a levee; the inmates being marshalled with much ceremony and attention to forms of precedence. After hearing reports regarding the regulation of his establishment, and holding consultations with his principal wives (one or two of whom are only permitted to sit in his presence), he is accompanied by proper officers to one of the kelwuts or private chambers, where he is joined by the princes of the blood and court favourites, who pay their respects to him, and with whom he enters into conversation. His majesty then calls for breakfast, which is brought in china dishes, in a covered tray sealed by the nazir or steward of the household, who likewise superintends the meal and presents each dish. The chief physician is also present to give his advice or assistance.

The repast being concluded, he receives his ministers and

secretaries, who make reports and receive commands. He next proceeds to his public levee, which is attended by the princes and officers of state. Here all public business is transacted, and rewards and punishments awarded; the king expressing aloud his approbation or displeasure, as the case may suggest. From this meeting, which commonly occupies an hour and a half, he adjourns to a council-chamber, where an equal period is employed in listening to his officers and favourites. The morning thus passed, he retires to his inner apartments, and occasionally indulges in a short repose.

A little before sunset, his majesty always makes his appearance in the outer rooms, and transacts business; or, if nothing requires his presence, he takes a ride on horseback. Between eight and nine he dines, with the same precautions that were observed at breakfast. He eats like his subjects, seated on a carpet, the dishes being placed on a rich embroidered cloth before him, and feeds himself, in the oriental fashion, with his fingers. After dinner, he retires to the private part of the palace, where he is often amused until a late hour by the singers and dancers of his harem, which, although regulated upon the strictest system, is, and must always be a scene of the meanest intrigue, the darkest jealousy, the keenest hatred, and the blackest crime. Such then are the monarch's personal duties, which are only interrupted by illness, urgent business, exercise on horseback, or the pursuit of field sports, in both of which Persians of all ranks delight, and can scarcely fail to excel.

CHAPTER IX.

Present State of Religion, Science, and Literature in Persia.

Sect of the Sheahs—Their Doctrines—Persians zealous Sheahs—Mohammedanism on the Decline—Causes—Suficism, or Freethinking—Principles and Tenets of the Sufies—Various Classes—Sciences taught and professed in Persia—Fine Arts—Literature—Persian Poetry—Its Character—Ferdusi—Sadi—Hafiz—Abdul Rahman Jamil—Other Poets.

THE history of a nation, it is obvious, would be incomplete without some account of its religion. But the original faith of the Persians has already been explained, and the rise and nature of Islam is so fully treated in another part of this Library,* that we shall here only advert to those articles of their creed where it differs from that of other Mohammedan states, and point out some of its chief peculiarities.

Of all the sects which arose to divide the followers of the Arabian impostor immediately after his death, the principal was that of the Sheahs or adherents of Ali. These, denying the right of the three first caliphs and all their successors to the pontificate, hold that of their master as indefeasible. They do so upon four distinct grounds; 1st, As being the earliest convert to the faith; 2d, On his nearness of kin to Mohammed, whose cousin he was; 3d, On his marriage with Fatima, the Prophet's daughter; and, 4th, On the declared will of the lawgiver himself, that Ali should be his successor. Thus the Sheahs contemn the four pillars of the Sonnée faith (as the four doctors, Hanifa, Malec, Shafei, and Hanbal are termed), repudiating their dogmas, and holding their names in abhorrence. They maintain the right of Hassan and Hossein, the sons of Ali, as the proper heirs of the caliphate, and honour them and their twelve immediate descendants with the appellation of high-priests or imams. Of these last

* See Family Library, Nos. LXVIII. and LXIX. Arabia, Ancient and Modern, vol. i. p. 218.

Imam Medhee is considered to be still alive, though concealed (Ghaib), so that no other can claim the title or possess the office. They imprecate maledictions on Abu Beker, Omar, and Othman, and especially detest Moawiyah and Yezid, as the more immediate instruments of the death of the Prophet's relatives. They observe as solemn fasts the days on which the progeny of Ali were murdered, and curse with tears and bitter revilings the memories of his assassins.

Besides these fundamental points of difference, there are between the Sheahs and Sonnees several minor grounds of variance, relating to forms of worship and civil usages, which it would be tedious to particularize. Mutual exasperation prevails; but, on the whole, the first are the more tolerant, perhaps because they are the weaker body, for they look on their opponents as erring brethren, yet still as believers in the true faith; while the Sonnees, with the arrogance of power, regard them as vile heretics, and worse even than Christians.

Among the Persians, who are zealous Sheahs, as well as among the Mohammedans in general, their religion has lost nearly all that may originally have been valuable, and has been perverted by fanaticism, venality, and designing hypocrisy, into a despicable superstition, fit only to enslave and brutalize the nation. The reverence which the founder of Islam claimed as the last of a long line of prophets, has grown into a species of devotion that confounds the Deity and his apostle, and has even been extended to many of his learned or pious successors. Themselves have been canonized as saints; their garments and relics have been invested with an imaginary sanctity, and their tombs with miraculous power. The Sheahs have of all others probably shared deepest in these absurdities. Not satisfied with the prescribed pilgrimages to Mecca, to Meshed Ali, and Kerbelah, they flock to Mushed and Koom; to the tombs of Imam Reza and his sister Fatima; to Ardebil, where lie interred the first of the Suffees; and to hundreds of other places, with still less reason; for there is scarcely a village in Persia without its imamzadeh, to which there is a greater or less resort in proportion to the celebrity of the saint.

The religion of Mohammed, in truth, seems everywhere on the decline. The zeal which flamed so fiercely in its early champions, and so rapidly consumed every thing within

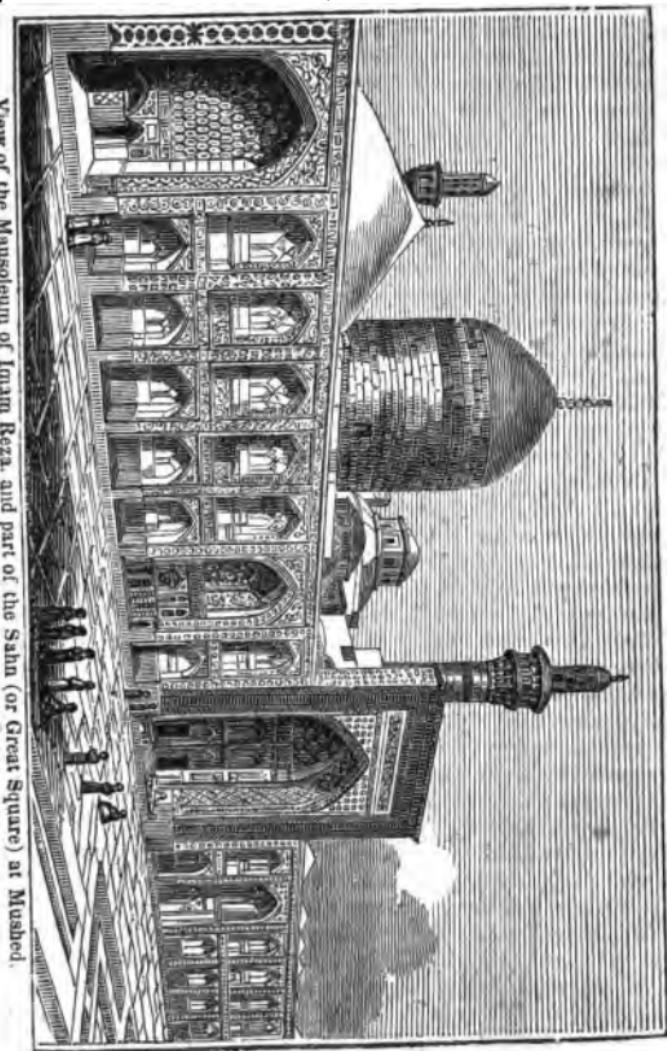
its reach, has now burnt low ; there are neither countries nor minds to be subjugated ; and the might of its princes is withered. Reason and knowledge have begun to assert their authority ; and, while Christianity spreads every day more extensively, the Koran experiences a rapid diminution of adherents. Of this decay there is no cause more powerful than the progress of infidelity. Among the Sheahs unbelievers are numerous ; and there is a class known by the name of Suffees, whose tenets are peculiar, and who have frequently exercised a singular influence on the political as well as the religious condition of Persia.

The origin of Suffeeism may be traced to the aspirations of an enthusiastic temperament, which disposes to abstruse metaphysical inquiry. Dissatisfied with existing opinions, minds so constituted presumptuously plunge into that ocean of mystery whose shores are wisely hid from human investigation. Wearyed with fruitless search, the more prudent retreat in time ; but the weak too often yield in the struggle, and become a prey to the hallucinations of insanity. "Suffeeism," observes the historian of Persia, "has excited in one shape or other in every age and region ; its mystical doctrines are to be found in the schools of ancient Greece, and in those of the modern philosophers of Europe. It is the dream of the most ignorant and the most learned,—is to be found in the palace and the cottage,—in the luxurious city, and in the pathless desert. It everywhere professes to be averse to error and superstition, but exists by the active propagation of both." In India this visionary creed has most extensively prevailed ; the habits of the nation and character of their religion encourage the spirit of holy abstraction in which it is founded ; and it probably spread thence to other nations. Thus the philosophy of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Epicurus, and their followers, may all be traced to the tenets of the Indian Bramins ; and we learn from Mohammedan authors, that these enthusiasts existed at the earliest period of Islam.*

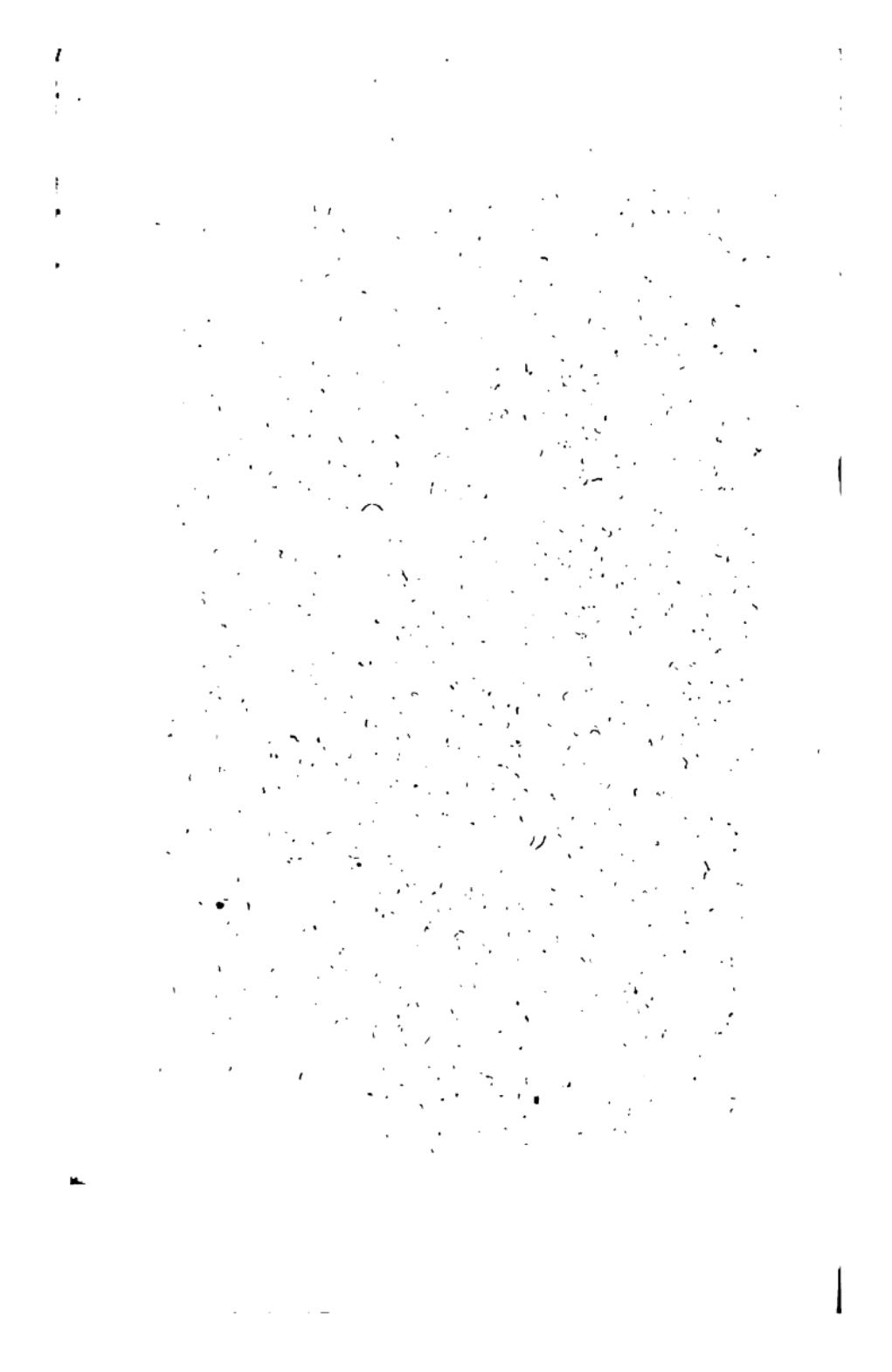
The doctrines of Suffeeism,† in so far as they can be re-

* Malcolm's Persia, vol. ii. p. 383.

† The term Suffee, which in Persia is synonymous with Derweish (the Dervise of English authors), has been derived from Saaf, pure, clean,—or Suffa, purity,—others suppose from Suff, the coarse woolen cloak in which the early ascetics were clothed—hence Suffi ; but the conjecture that it may have been adopted from the Greek Σοφοι, wise men, seems at least as probable as either of the others.



View of the Mausoleum of Imam Reza, and part of the Sahn (or Great Square) at Mashed.



duced to definite terms, appear to be as follows :—The Almighty Creator of the Universe, say they, is diffused throughout creation. The essence of his divinity, emanating from him continually as rays from the sun, vivifies all nature, and is at continually reabsorbed. They believe the souls of men to be scintillations of this essence—of God, not from God, and therefore of an equality with Him. They represent themselves as constantly engaged in searching after truth, and admiring the perfections of the Deity. An ardent but mystical love of the Creator, which frequently breaks forth in the most extravagant manner and towards the most extraordinary objects, in which they fancy the divine image to be reflected, is the soul of their creed, and reunion with Him their ultimate object; to have “the corporeal veil removed, when the emancipated soul will mix again with the glorious essence from which it has been separated, but not divided.”*

But the method of accomplishing this great end is arduous, and four principal stages are described through which the aspirant must pass ; and during the pilgrimage it is indispensable that he should pay absolute submission to the mandates of his heavenly guide. The first, Nasoot, that of Humanity, requires perfect obedience to all the observances of the established religion, as a useful discipline to prepare for advancing to the second stage. This is termed Tur-reekat or the Path ; in his course to which he gains strength to acquire more exalted eminence, and is admitted within the pale of Suffeism. The disciple may now abandon practical for spiritual worship ; but at this point he has also reached a more laborious and thorny part of his journey, which can only be safely trodden by those who distinguish themselves by piety, virtue, and fortitude. Led by a suitable teacher, the young Suffee in due time attains the third very important step, which is that of Aruf or Knowledge, when he is held to be inspired and equal to the angels. The fourth, Hukeekut or Truth, implies his perfect union with the Deity.

The multitude of discordant opinions, which the study of subjects so undefined necessarily gives rise to, has produced an infinite variety of sects in Suffeism. To enumerate

* Malcolm's Persia, vol. ii. p. 366

them all would be equally tedious and uninstructive ; but we shall mention two which are considered as most important. The Hulooleah, or inspired, maintain that God has entered into them, and that the Divine Spirit is breathed into all who possess an intelligent one. The Itahedeh or Unionists believe that God is *as one* with every enlightened being. They compare their souls to charcoal, the Almighty to flame ; and say, that as charcoal uniting with flame becomes flame, so their immortal part, from its union with God, becomes God.

Mohammedan Suffeas contend that the Prophet professed their peculiar doctrines.* Even the Patriarch Abraham is declared by them to have been one of their sheiks or caliphas, as their principal and most venerated teachers are called. The Persians of this order deem Ali, his sons, and all the twelve imams, to have been supporters of their creed ; and assert that many of their eminent confessors derive their title to the keerkah, or sacred mantle, from these sources. The dignity of caliph, or chief-instructor, is only to be acquired by the most painful perseverance in fasting and prayer,—complete abstraction from all worldly pursuits. The man may die before the saint can be born, and many accordingly perish in endeavouring to reach the third stage, the attainment of which is requisite for a teacher, and which elevates him to the rank of angels. Solitude, prayer, and almost total abstinence for forty days, during which the aspirant maintains a contemplative posture with invincible patience, is but the initiatory trial ; for, after “the living skeleton walks forth,” he has years of probation scarcely less intolerable to endure : but the prize is great, and supports the fainting weakness of human nature. The caliph in his turn enjoys the reverence of mankind ; the absolute and submissive devotion of his disciples ; and when the period of his reunion with the Creator arrives, he bequeaths his mantle to the most deserving of his followers. This fasting and abstraction, obviously derived from the practice of Hindoo ascetics, has not been permitted to degenerate into the hor-

* This assertion is made on the authority of a tradition, according to which Mohammed indicated the four stages of Suffeism. The law canonical is compared to a vessel ; the road, or path, is the sea ; knowledge of Divine things is as the shell ; and knowledge of the Divinity as the pearl. But he who would obtain the pearl must first embark in the vessel. *Malcolm's Persia*, vol. ii. p. 393.

rible austerities of the Braminical fanatics. The real learning of many Suffees appears to have elevated their doctrine above such superstitious observances. The finest poets of their times and country were among their most distinguished teachers; for "poetry is the very essence of Suffeism, and the works of the moral Sadi, the divine Hafiz, the celebrated Jami, and the sweet-tongued Mellah of Roum, may be termed the Scriptures of Suffeiam." The doctrines they profess to inculcate are piety, virtue, benevolence, forbearance, abstemiousness; although the terms in which these lessons are conveyed might startle the Christian reader, and induce him to imagine he was perusing an exhortation to sensuality and profligacy.

Zeal and enthusiasm are the characteristics of the true Suffee; and he is ready to perish for his opinions: those who thus suffer are accounted martyrs, and many fables are related of them. One, who had been flayed alive for having raised a dead person to life, persisted in walking about, carrying his own skin on his arm, soliciting the food which the Faithful were prohibited from bestowing on the excommunicated saint!

This school of philosophers are strict predestinarians; many of whom disclaim the existence of evil, and consider the opposite opinion as an impious arraignment of the perfection of God. Others admit the evil, but deny the free agency of man; replying to all questions in the words of Hafiz:—"My destiny has been thrown into a tavern [this sinful world] by the Almighty: tell me then, oh teacher, where is my crime?" They reject, according to some, the doctrine of rewards and punishments, as incompatible with their fundamental tenet of reabsorption into the divine essence; yet certain sects promise to the virtuous a purer bliss than the sensual paradise of Mohammed, and condemn the wicked to the horrors of a terrible but visionary hell.

Suffeiam, in short, presents itself in an infinity of shapes, according to the genius of its professors: it is the superstition of the freethinker, and is often assumed as a cloak to cover entire infidelity. Like skepticism in general, it attacks all existing religion, and unsettles belief without offering any substitute on which the harassed soul might lean. It infests the mischief, but refuses the remedy; and, in fact, the most profligate disturbers of the peace of mankind have shel-

tered themselves under this and synonymous names. Hus-sun Subah and his assassins were a race of Suffees; so were the Roushuneah of Bayazeed, who interrupted the tranquillity of Akbar's reign, and struck a blow which was felt on the throne of Delhi; and Persia has more recently been agitated by the followers and successors of Meer Maasoom Ali.* The Sheah faith, as professed in that kingdom, has in truth contracted, from its connexion with the ancestors of the Suffavean race, a tinge of this heresy which favours the spread of their doctrines; nor are these likely to be checked by the character of the orthodox religion. It has been conjectured that there are between 200,000 and 300,000 professed Suffees in the country; but this probably falls greatly short of the number who are secretly inclined to infidelity.

A short space will suffice for all that we can say regarding the sciences, arts, and literature. Before the Mohammedan conquest the subject is a blank; for nothing remains to enable us to judge of the literary attainments of the ancient Persians. Little, indeed, is to be expected from the professors of a faith, whose early champions declared all learning useless beyond what the Koran contains, and who, in latter days, have scrupulously avoided all intercourse with those who could have increased their knowledge.

Among the sciences most cultivated are those of astronomy, judicial astrology, metaphysics, logic, mathematics, and physic. In the first their efforts are contemptible; their theories, founded on the Ptolemaean system, with strange additions of their own, are utterly useless, unless it be to aid their still more childish dreams in astrology. No Persian will undertake the most trivial affair, far less any enterprise of moment, without consulting a professor of this delusive art; and when a mirza or a mollah has once established his reputation as an astrologer, he is in the sure way to become rich. Should a lucky day arrive before a traveller is ready for his journey, he leaves home, though he should remain for weeks in some incommodious lodging till his preparations are com-

* Persecuted by Shah Hussein and his priesthood, this teacher was subsequently tolerated by Kureem-Khan, who was, however, at length forced to banish him from Shiraz. After the death of the latter monarch he emerged from obscurity, and began anew to propagate his doctrines. Severely checked by Ali Mourad Khan, he was forced to fly to Kabul; the ruler of which, dreading his dangerous influence, drove him back to Persia, where he was slain near Kermanshah.

plete; satisfied that the favourable influence of the stars has been secured by making the move at the proper conjuncture. An ambassador about to proceed to India was induced by the representations of the Wise Men, although the ship in which he was to sail was not ready, not only to leave a comfortable dwelling at Bushire and occupy a tent on the hot sands near it, but even to cause the wall of the town and several houses to be penetrated, that he might depart without facing a most malignant, though invisible, constellation, which would otherwise have blasted the success of his mission.

Their metaphysics and logic are scarcely less puerile. The first consists of little more than a collection of disputatious sophisms, turning on wild and unprofitable paradoxes; the second, in an ingenious method of playing upon words, the object not being so much to arrive at truth as to display quickness of mind and readiness of answer in the discussion of plausible hypotheses. Geography is no better understood. Their knowledge of countries and their relative positions is extremely confused; nor can they lay down with any exactness even those places or regions with which they are most familiar.

Mathematics, although they are not much more beneficially applied, are taught on better principles; for the Persians are acquainted with the works of Euclid. Chymistry is unknown; but alchymy is a favourite study, and the search after the philosopher's stone continues an eager pursuit. The adepts work with no less secrecy and hope than their deluded brethren used to do in the West; nor are the frauds they commit on credulous and wealthy dupes less palpable or notorious.

In their knowledge of medicine they are still deplorably deficient. They declare themselves pupils of Galen and Hippocrates (called by them Jalenoos and Bocrat); but their practice is a mixture of the most wretched empiricism, with the exhibition of a few simples, the qualities of which experience has taught them. They classify diseases into four divisions,—hot, cold, moist, and dry,—and this in the most arbitrary manner on no apparent principle. They combat each disease by an application of an opposite tendency,* the

* A gentleman in India, whose servant was unwell, consulted a native physician. "Sir," said the doctor, "the patient's illness arises from

virtues of the remedy being as vaguely determined as the nature of the disorder. They are totally ignorant of anatomy, and unacquainted with the circulation of the blood ; so that their proficiency in surgery is no greater than their knowledge of medicine ; and when patients recover under their hands, it is to be attributed to soundness of constitution rather than to any ability of treatment on the part of the professional attendant.

Though they admire the skill of Europeans, they adhere obstinately to their own practice ; and all the persuasion of the medical gentlemen who accompanied the British embassies, from the year 1800 to 1810, were insufficient to establish vaccination, although the ravages of the small-pox are often dreadful. In cases where calomel would, in the opinion of the English physicians, have saved many lives, they persevered in resisting its use, as a remedy which, being hot in itself, could not be advisable in a hot disease ; ice and refrigerating draughts were given in preference, which cooled many effectually. Yet they have discovered a method of quickly affecting the system with mercury, by causing the patient to inhale, through the common calleoon, or water-pipe, a lozenge made of cinnabar and flour.

There are persons, among the tribes particularly, who pretend to hereditary powers of curing certain distempers. Sir John Malcolm mentions a chief named Hedayut Kouli Khan, who banished agues by tying his patients up by the heels when the periodical attack was approaching, applying the bastinado severely, and abusing them bitterly all the time,—a process which, he asserted, produced “heat and terror, instead of a cold fit.”

The profits of science are confined to those who enjoy a name for high proficiency in divinity, astrology, and physic ; but the latter is miserably paid. The two former, when combined, thrive best.

In the fine arts, the Persians have little to boast of ; but there is reason to believe, that in former ages their skill was much superior to what it is at present. Nor is it to be wondered that excellence in any department should be rare, when the professor runs the risk of being ordered to labour sixteen different causes ; now in this pill, which I mean to give, there are sixteen different ingredients, so arranged that each will operate upon its respective cause, and thus cure your servant.”

without payment for the king or governor to whom his acquirements might first become known. In painting and sculpture it is next to impossible they should ever become adepts, as, in the first place, they possess no models to imitate, and, in the second, it is repugnant to the Mohammedan faith to make representations of the human form.* When we do meet with any such attempt, as in the delineations of battles or hunting-pieces,† the total absence of all knowledge of drawing and perspective renders the effect ludicrous, if not disgusting. Inkstands and small boxes are made at Shiraz and Ispahan, and adorned with painting, chiefly of birds and flowers, and occasionally of beautiful girls and boys, finished with an accuracy which, under better direction, might be successfully exerted for nobler purposes. The stone and seal-cutters of the same city are famous for the excellence of their workmanship. Cashan is known for its manufacture of lacquered tiles, which ornament many of the gorgeous domes and minarets in Persia. Coarse china and glassware are made in various places. The swordblades of Herat, Mushed, and Shiraz, are highly esteemed, as well as their other work in steel;‡ and gold and silver brocade, with silks of considerable beauty, are produced in many parts of the country.

The literature of Persia is chiefly confined to works on theology and polemics. There are indeed rude treatises on the sciences of which we have made mention, as well as works on history, poetry, and romance; but little improvement in any of these branches has been made for centuries. Neither bard nor historian has appeared in these latter days like those who adorned the age of the Ghiznevides, the Seljuquides, the Attabegs of Fars, or of Sultan Hussein Baicara. It would be vain to attempt an account of all the native annalists; yet, while merely glancing at the subject, it would be unpardonable to pass in silence the works of Meerkhond and Khondemir,—the Rozat al Suffa and the Kholausut al Akbar,—the Habeeb al Seyer, the Zeenut al Tuareekk, the Tareek e Gozeideh, the Tareek e Tabri, the Tareek e Timur of Shareef u Dien Ali, which, with many others of scarcely

* Of late years, however, there have been numerous deviations from this rule.

† There are some better pictures than usual in the palace of the Chehel Sitoos at Ispahan.

‡ This steel is all imported from India.

less note, form the groundwork of their modern history. Though at times the style of these writings may be flowery or hyperbolical, and in other instances meager and confined to a detail of facts, yet the authors generally narrate with accuracy events within their own knowledge and are free from political prejudices, except when recording the actions of their sovereigns or patrons.

It is in poetry that the Persians chiefly excel; and they can produce the names of a greater number of eminent authors in this department than any nation of the East.* From the highest to the lowest they possess an exquisite relish for the beauties of such compositions: not only do mirzas and upper servants repeat whole poems,—the very horsekeepers and muleteers will thunder out a passage from Ferdusi, or chant an ode from Hafiz; and if you venture to find fault with your tent-pitcher, it is ten to one but he replies with a stanza from Rudiki, or a moral apophthegm from Sadi.

Their poetry may be divided into epic and narrative, moral and lyric. Of the first class Ferdusi must be held as the father, although Munsoor Dukiki did compose about 1000 verses of the Shah Nameh.† The name of the former, the Homer of Persia, has already occurred in these pages as the author of the earliest epic and historical poem in the language. It consists, indeed, of a consecutive series of narratives, descriptive of the history of the country for 3700 years, from the most ancient period down to the Arabian conquest. The whole contains 60,000 couplets, and "is longer," says Sir William Jones, "than the Iliad: the characters in it are various and striking, the figures bold and animated, and the diction everywhere sonorous, yet noble,—polished, yet full of fire." "In this work," says Sir J. Malcolm, "the most fastidious European reader will meet with numerous passages of exquisite beauty; the narrative is generally very perspicuous, and some of the finest scenes in it are described with simplicity and elegance of diction. To those whose taste is

* Sir William Jones mentions a MS. in Oxford which contains the lives of 135 of the finest Persian poets, who have left very ample collections of their works,—but the versifiers are, he says, without number.

† It seems doubtful whether Ferdusi availed himself of the labours of his predecessor. We are told by Ferista, however, that, in consequence of illness, Ferdusi was assisted in one part by Asidi, who composed 4000 verses.

offended with hyperbole, the tender parts of his work will have most beauty, as they are freest from this characteristic defect of Eastern writers."

Among those who rank next to Ferdusi in the same style of writing, may be mentioned Nizami, who composed a life of Alexander the Great with much genius and richness of imagination. This poem is by some considered as a musnavee,—a term generally applied to narratives descriptive of the charms of love or of the spring; and among these are placed poetic romances, such as the Yussuff and Zuleika of Jami; another on the same subject by Ferdusi; the Leilah and Mujnoor of Hatifi; that of Kheosroo and Shireen; and many others, which are read and recited with rapture all over Persia.

"Among the didactic poets of Persia," remarks Sir John Malcolm, "Sadi certainly ranks the highest." His Goolestaneh and Bostam abound in beautiful maxims and fine moral precepts. Sadi, or, as from his rank as a Suffee teacher he was commonly called, Sheik Sadi, was born at Shiraz (A. D. 1194). He early became enamoured of a wandering life; and there were few countries of Asia which, in the course of his travels, he did not visit. While in Syria he was taken by the Crusaders, and actually compelled to labour as a slave at the fortifications of Tripoli. From this condition he was relieved by a merchant of Aleppo, who not only paid ten golden crowns for his ransom, but gave him his daughter, with a dowry of a hundred. The lady, however, proved a shrew; and Sadi, in several parts of his works, gives vent to the chagrin which his marriage had occasioned. Among other insults, she is said to have mentioned as a reproach, that her father had bought him from the Christians for ten crowns. "Yes," replied the unhappy moralist, with a sigh, "and sold me to you for a hundred."

There is recorded an interesting encounter between the sheik and Humam Tabrizee, a contemporary poet of some celebrity. They met accidentally in a bath at Tabriz, without knowing each other; but entering into conversation, Humam became aware of the birthplace of his companion, and at the same time declared himself a native of the city where they then were. A trial of wit took place, when the latter, observing the baldness of his companion,—a personal peculiarity very common among his countrymen,—rallied him on

it. "Whence comes it," said he, presenting the round-shaped ewer used in ablutions, and turned upside down; "whence comes it that all you Shirazees have heads like this?"—"And how comes it," replied Sadi, presenting his own vessel, and pointing to its empty cavity, "that all you Tabrizees have heads like this?" On retiring from the bath they entered into some further discourse; in consequence of which, the Tabrizian recognised in the stranger the celebrated Sheik Sadi, and lavished upon him both kindness and honours.

Sadi died in his native city, at the extreme age of 120 lunar, or 116 solar years. His tomb is still to be seen near the place of his birth, in a small imarut, or mosque-like edifice within an enclosure, which also contains some fine fir-trees and a few cypresses.

It is difficult to class the candidates for poetic fame in those mystic and lyrical productions, in which this nation has in all ages delighted. The odes of Hafiz have obtained celebrity beyond the sphere of Eastern literature; and the poetry of our own language has been enriched by some beautiful translations from his works. Shiraz claims also the honour of giving birth to this, the sweetest bard of Persia. He flourished in the age of Tamerlane, who, when he came to the place where he dwelt, after the defeat of Shah Mansour, desired to see and converse with him. With feigned or real displeasure, the monarch demanded how he dared to make so free with his two noble cities of Samarcand and Bokhara, which, in a beautiful stanza,* he professed he would give for a mole on the cheek of his mistress. "Can the gifts of Hafiz ever impoverish Timur?" was the reply; which changed the conqueror's wrath into admiration, and elicited reward instead of punishment.

The poetry of this writer has been pronounced by most Persian scholars to be of a singularly original character,—simple and unaffected, yet possessing a wild and peculiar sublimity. The suddenness of his transitions from the joys of love and wine to reflections on the instability of human felicity are beautiful, and in this respect greatly resemble the odes of Horace. There are few lyrical effusions which can

* This well-known ode, beginning "Agur een Toork i Shirauzee," has been beautifully but freely translated by Sir William Jones.

bear translation, and thus it must be difficult for an English reader to comprehend the merits of Hafiz ; but in his own land he is fully appreciated ; and perhaps no poet of any country ever attained greater popularity among those for whom he wrote than the celebrated Khaujeh of Shiraz.

The mortal remains of the bard rest near the city whose praises he sang so sweetly, not far from the tomb of Sadi ; like which, it is situated in a small enclosure. It continues to this day a frequent resort of his countrymen, who repair thither to recite his odes under the shade of the cypresses that rise around it, and who appeal to the pages of their favourite poet for an omen* of success in all their important undertakings.

Next to Hafiz in celebrity may be placed Abdul Rahman Jami, so named from the village where he lived in the reign of Sultan Hussein Baicara. He was a celebrated doctor of laws, but not less a determined Suffee ; and his Divan, or collection of odes, which are remarkable for their sweetness, is greatly esteemed by these enthusiasts. We have already noticed his romance of Yussuff and Zuleika. We may add, that his wit was equal to his poetic genius, while the aptness of his repartees, and the success with which he repressed the vanity of boasters, are still mentioned with admiration. A poet, who had obtained some praise at a competition of authors, was relating the various happy replies he had made : — “Thou hast answered well to-day,” said Jami, regarding him with coldness, “but hast thou thought of what thou shalt answer to-morrow?” To-day and to-morrow, in the mystic language, signify this life and the next.

We shall dwell no longer upon the names of Persian poets, of whom the works of Nizami, Omar, Keyoomi, Oorf, Rudiki,† and a hundred others, might be cited as high examples of genius. We are not, however, to imagine, that all of them would convey pleasure to the refined taste of Europe. They contain many beautiful thoughts, and their diction is fre-

* The works of Hafiz are used, as well as the Koran, for taking out a fal or omen, after the manner of the Sortes Virgilianæ.

† So powerful was the genius of Rudiki, that, though born blind, he attained the highest rank and respect at the court of Nazir Samani, third of the race. His establishment was placed on a level with that of the first nobles ; and we may judge of its magnificence, if we can believe that when he attended his patron in the field he was served by 200 slaves, and his equipage was carried by 400 camels.

quently mellifluous and expressive ; but these excellences are constantly disfigured by extravagance and bombast ; while the mind is fatigued by the repetition of metaphors and similes, which are often miserably poor. " Yet notwithstanding all these defects," observes an Eastern traveller and scholar,* " if the end of poetry be to please, the Persian poets are eminently successful ; nor will I believe that any one who really understood Hafiz, ever laid aside his book without having received much satisfaction from the perusal of his odes."

In the present day, this species of writing appears to have suffered the fate of all other things in Persia. " The poets," says the historian of that country, " are still greater flatterers than the astrologers. The great majority are poor, and from their numbers it is quite impossible it should be otherwise. Every person of moderate education may, if he prefer a life of idleness to one of industry, assume the name of bard, and the merest rhymer receives some respect from the honoured appellation. While some chant the wonderful deeds of the king or principal chiefs, or compose collections of odes (divans) on the mystical subject of Divine love, others are content with panegyrizing the virtues, wisdom, bravery, and discernment of those who bestow their bounty upon them, or allow them a place at their table ; they make epigrams to amuse their patrons, and are ready either to recite their own verses, or to show their knowledge by quoting the finest passages in the works of others ; the facilities of education at the numerous medrassas (colleges), and the indulgence which the usages of these seminaries invite, produce a swarm of students, who pass their useless lives in indolence and poverty."†

* Mr. Scott Waring. See his "Tour to Sheeraux," page 236.

† Malcolm's Persia, vol. ii. p. 560.

CHAPTER X.

Description and Character of the Persian People.

Classes of the Population—Courtiers and Officers of State—Their precarious Condition—Gholams—Inhabitants of Towns—Merchants—Ecclesiastical Order—Husbandmen—Women—The Royal Harem—Occupations—Wandering Tribes—Indigenous—Arabian—Turkish—Kurdish—Characters and Anecdotes of these tribes—Turkoman Tribes—General Character of the People—Their Manners and Customs.

THE character and manners of a people are ever greatly influenced by their government. When that is well regulated, a corresponding consistency and order pervade their habits; but under despotic sway, where they only reflect the qualities of the ruler, their dispositions vary with that of the reigning prince. Hence the difficulty of giving a portrait of the inhabitants of a kingdom thus situated, that shall be universally recognised as just; and to this fact may be attributed the conflicting accounts of travellers who at different periods have visited the same country. Still there exists a certain national individuality of character apart from the influence of 'accidental circumstances'; and in no Asiatic state, we believe, are such distinguishing features more discernible than among the Persians.

That people may be considered as formed of two great classes,—the fixed and the erratic; but we shall divide them into four,—those, namely, who are connected with the several courts, metropolitan and provincial, including the functionaries of government and the military; inhabitants of towns, comprehending merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, together with men of religious orders, of business, or of learning; those employed in agriculture; and, lastly, the tribes and Eelials.

The officers of all despotic courts necessarily resemble each other, being moulded to the fashion of the government which employs them. Slaves to the caprice of the monarch whom they serve, their very existence depends on his favour,

and hence their whole efforts are directed to secure that object. Dissimulation and flattery are their chief study; their minds are occupied with intrigue, and their time in amassing, by the most flagitious methods, that wealth which their extravagance requires, and to which they look as an ulterior means of safety, although it still oftener proves their ruin. Capriciously, haughtily, and cruelly dealt with themselves, they become capricious, haughty, and cruel to their inferiors; and thus the court and all who are attached to it are rendered, to the poor man, objects of terror and disgust.

Persons so educated can possess little virtue. They become skilful in business; are often well-informed, acute, polished in manner, lively, mild, and courteous, and rarely give way to the expression of their feelings. But under these specious appearances they are deceitful, treacherous, and venal; and, where they can be so with impunity, arrogant and overbearing. Such, with few exceptions, is the character of the Persian court, its officials, and dependents; and the pernicious influence of the capital spreads corruption throughout every district of the empire.

The ministers of state are usually selected from the class called mirzaa,—secretaries; that is, or, as the term may be aptly translated, men of business; for we have said that it has been the policy of kings to check the pride of the military nobles, by choosing many of the principal functionaries from the lowest ranks of life, as being more likely, from gratitude and feelings of dependence, to preserve their allegiance, than those who at the call of ambition might summon a powerful tribe to their assistance.

The mirzaa are in general citizens who have devoted themselves to duties which require a good education. They ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the rules and forms of epistolary correspondence, as well as of official business; though, as the situations to which they may be appointed are various, they are seldom sufficiently qualified. Such persons are generally free from the arrogance of chiefs or nobles; have a mild and subdued address; are often highly accomplished, but equally versed in deceit, and not very remarkable for strict morality. They rarely indulge in martial or athletic pursuits; nor do they in general assume much state. They do not wear a sword, and from the highest to the lowest of them are distinguished by carrying a culumdaun or inkstand stuck in their girdle instead of a dagger.

The unceremonious manner in which the king exercises his absolute power over the ministers and courtiers has already been illustrated, and to this danger the virtuous and corrupt are alike exposed ; for besides the ebullitions of caprice they are ever liable to the effects of intrigue and false accusation. Every individual can have access to the monarch, whose duty it is to listen to the grievances of his subjects ; and even where there is no wish to redress an injury, his majesty and attendants treasure up complaints that they may afterward employ them to the accomplishment of their own objects. The provincial collectors of revenue, placed between rapacious masters and a populace reluctant to comply with even just demands, are so miserable, that an old courtier, when asked by the Prince of Shiraz what penalty should be inflicted on a very notorious thief, replied, " Make him manager of a district in Fars ; I can conceive no crime for which that appointment would not be an adequate punishment." Yet although office is attended with extreme danger, it is sought with avidity. A certain influence and often great wealth accompany the risk ; and it seems to be the genius of this people to seize the passing good with reckless indifference to the future.

Notwithstanding the extortion of government, not only do the ministers, the nobles, and all persons in the public service, appear to live in affluence, but the exactions of their superiors have so little subdued the spirit of the people in general, that they loudly announce their grievances before the highest tribunals. It may be added that, while few are in actual want, many, particularly among the merchants and principal landholders, amass considerable fortunes. Industry and frugality may go far to account for this seeming contradiction; as regards the lower orders ; and falsehood, which always keeps pace with tyranny, enables those above them to elude, to a certain extent at least, the demands of rapacity. " Every one complains of poverty ; but this complaint as often proceeds from a desire to avoid oppression as from its actual privations."*— " Poverty and misery," said the mehmandar of the British mission to Teheran, in conversing with the author of these pages, " pervade every class of society ; and the retainers of the court are as badly off as their neighbours.

I myself have nominally a salary of 150 tomans a-year; but it is wretchedly ill paid, and I am forced to borrow on future prospects to support my family and preserve appearances. Years pass on; debts accumulate; my property is utterly gone; and, like most in my own, and many in far higher stations, I am a ruined man." The case was the same in the time of Chardin: "They are," says he, "the greatest spendthrifts in the world; they cannot keep their money,—let them receive ever so much, it is immediately spent. Let the king, for example, give one of them 50,000 or 100,000 livres, in fifteen days it will all be disposed of. He buys slaves of either sex,—seeks out for mistresses,—sets up a grand establishment,—dresses and furnishes sumptuously,—and expends at a rate which, unless other means present themselves, renders him speedily penniless. In less than two months we see our gentleman commencing to get quit of all his finery: his horses go first,—then his supernumerary servants,—then his mistresses,—then, one by one, his slaves,—and, finally, piece by piece, his clothes."

Nothing more strikingly illustrates the demoralizing influence of the system of government in Persia, than the insensibility to disgrace which it produces among all classes of the people,—a callousness that is most remarkable among courtiers. A minister or governor offends the king, or is made the object of accusation, justly or unjustly. He is condemned, perhaps unheard; his property is confiscated, his slaves are given to others, his family and wives are insulted, perhaps delivered over to the brutality of grooms and feroshes, and his person is maltreated with blows or mutilated by the executioner's knife. Nothing can be imagined more complete than such a degradation; nothing, one would imagine, could be more poignant than his anguish, or more deep and deadly than his hatred and thirst for revenge. Yet these reverses are considered merely as among the casualties of service, as clouds obscuring for a while the splendour of courtly fortune, but which will soon pass away, and permit the sun of prosperity to shine again in its fullest lustre; and experience proves that these calculations are correct, for the storm often blows by as rapidly as it comes on. Royal caprice receives the sufferer again into favour; his family is sent back to him, with such of his slaves as can be recovered; and his property, pruned of all dangerous exuberance, is re-

turned. A bath mollifies his bruised feet,—a cap conceals his cropped ears,—a khelut covers the multitude of sins and stains, and proves a sovereign remedy for all misfortunes,—and the whitewashed culprit is often reinstated in the very government he had lost, perhaps carrying with him a sentence of disgrace to his successor, to whose intrigues he owed his temporary fall. It is indeed surprising to see how improvidently the king and his ministers bestow situations of confidence on strangers, or on men who, from having been the objects of such injustice as we have described, might be dreaded as their bitterest enemies; yet the management of a conquered state is frequently intrusted to the khan or prince who before possessed it in his own right. The pardoned rebel of one province is appointed to the supreme command in another; and the disgraced noble or governor is sent to take charge of a district where the utmost fidelity and zeal are required.

Yet, severe as the procedure towards faulty or suspected servants too often is; capital punishments are comparatively rare. We do not speak of the times of a Nadir or an Aga Mohammed Khan, when no man's life was for a moment secure, but of the ordinary administration of such kings as the Suffees; and the princes who succeeded them. This fact is remarked by Chardin, and confirmed by Sir John Malcolm. But when sentence of death is passed against the governor of a province or a nobleman residing at court, the method of putting it in execution is as follows:—An order made out by the prime minister and under the royal seal, together with that of one of the civil or ecclesiastical magistrates, is placed in the hands of an officer appointed for the purpose, commonly a nassakchee or a gholam. This man rides post, pressing horses as he requires them. Then, presenting himself to the principal person of the place, he shows the royal mandate, and forces that individual to accompany him and lend his assistance. He enters the house of the condemned, booted, armed, and travel-stained; walks straight up to his victim, takes the warrant from his bosom, and places it in the hands of his witness; then, drawing his scimitar, he rushes on the unfortunate criminal, exclaiming, “It is the king's command,” cuts him down, and strikes off his head. Resistance is seldom offered; for were the delinquent powerful enough for the attempt, the messenger

of death would never arrive to execute the decree ; and there have been instances, even when the person proscribed was not in actual rebellion, of his causing the fatal officer to be robbed of the warrant, thus gaining time until interest could be made for his pardon. But when once his destination is reached, escape is scarcely possible ; for terror of the royal name arms every one against him who is denounced,—even in his own house he is viewed as an excommunicated wretch, whom to assist or to touch were ruin. Should the sentence only imply disgrace, or when its extent is yet unknown, it is melancholy to see how the object of kingly displeasure is instantaneously forsaken like an infected creature. "All nature," says Chardin, "seems roused against him;" and the man, a glance of whose eye but a moment before would have shed delight on thousands of dependants, might then in vain solicit a cup of water or the use of a calceoon.

In speaking of the minions of the court, we cannot omit mention of that peculiar class of military favourites termed gholams. These are the royal body-guards, devoted, confidential, and thence their appellation of slaves. They consist of youthful Georgian or Circassian captives, intermingled with the sons of the first nobles in Persia ; for the situation being one of honour as well as of contingent emolument, it is eagerly sought even by the highest ranks. These troops, who in the present day amount to between 3000 and 4000, and who in some degree resemble the mousquetaires of the old French government, are regularly imbodyed, although they do not muster nor parade like a corps on service. They are chiefly distributed about the residence of his majesty, and always attend him in camp. They are well mounted, and armed with a matchlock or musket, a sword, and sometimes pistols ; and they generally carry a shield over their shoulder. Their pay varies according to their standing and estimation ; but few receive less than from twenty to thirty tomans a-year. They are commonly employed as messengers on confidential business, and the more experienced are frequently intrusted with affairs of high importance, in which they contrive to amass large sums by extortion. Their name is a terror to the country, and the arrival of a gholam e shahee is enough to throw a whole district into alarm ; it has even depopulated a village for the time.

The inhabitants of towns,—the Sheherees, as they are

often called contemptuously by the rural tribes,—are a mixed race of Turks, Tartars, Arabians, Armenians, and Georgians, engrafted on the vigorous stock of ancient Persians. In a class which includes so many professions and interests there must be a corresponding variety of character; but they are in general industrious, and, though by no means models of morality, they are not nearly so unprincipled as the higher orders. All are eager for gain, yet not unfrequently disposed to extravagance; while, on the other hand, instances of extreme penuriousness are common. They are nurtured in falsehood and deceit; but are cheerful, polite, sociable, quick of apprehension, kind indulgent masters, and good servants.*

The merchants are numerous, and often wealthy, although, with the caution of those who know the hazard, they do not often display their riches. Traders throughout the East enjoy a peculiar degree of consideration, and are protected, both as a source of revenue and a medium of maintaining useful relations with foreign states. Among them, therefore, it is not unusual to find men of more cultivated minds than the rest of their countrymen. The shopkeepers and tradesmen, being more subject to the caprice of those above them in rank, are distinguished for cunning and insincerity; and in them may be perceived the same versatility, the same officious humility, the same eagerness to gain the slightest advantage, which are observable in all those whose livelihood depends on their own exertion and the favour of their superiors.

The ecclesiastical body, which includes the expounders of the written law, is very numerous, wealthy, and powerful. The priesthood consists of many orders, from the Sudder al Sudoor down to the lowest of the mollahs. The former was the pontiff,—the acknowledged vicar of the imams,—and he, with the approbation of the sovereign, nominated the principal judges of the kingdom. Nadir Shah abolished this appointment, seizing all the lands appropriated to the support

* So says Sir J. Malcolm, and we believe with justice.—A considerable difference of character exists between the inhabitants of various towns, arising from peculiarities of descent, ancient customs, or local situation. Thus the natives of Casbin, Tabriz, Hamadan, Shiraz, and Yezl, are remarkable for courage, and often for turbulence; while those of Koom, Cashan, Ispahan, and other places, are proverbial for cowardice.

of religious establishments,—an act of arbitrary sacrilege which has not hitherto been wholly compensated. Mooshteheds are now the highest order of priests ; they have assumed the authority of the former without possessing their revenues. There are seldom more than three or four of this dignity ; and these are called to office by the silent but unanimous election of their fellow-citizens, in consequence of superior sanctity and learning. Indeed their duties, which have chiefly in view the protection of the people against the oppression of their rulers, almost necessarily precludes any connexion with the king.

The Sheik al Islam, or Ruler of the Faith, is next in rank to the mooshteheds, and is, as has before been mentioned, the supreme judge of the written law, in which capacity he enjoys a salary* from government ; and one who is upright often acquires as much influence as a mooshtehed.

In every mosque of consequence, and at every considerable shrine, there are at least three regular ecclesiastical officers : the Mootwullee, who manages its temporal affairs ; the Mu-ezin, or Crier to Prayers ; and the Mollah, who conducts the ceremonial. If the establishment is rich, there are several of the last-mentioned order, from among whom is selected a Peish Numaz, who recites the prayers and goes through the motions and genuflexions to guide the congregation. They also occasionally preach a sort of sermon on texts from the Koran. Besides these, there are in every city, and connected with all seminaries of learning, a crowd of mollahs, who live by their wits, and have little of the priest but the name. They practise astrology, write letters and contracts for those who are ignorant of penmanship, and contrive by these means to prolong a miserable existence. Nothing can be lower than the character of these people ; their hypocrisy, profligacy, and want of principle, are the subject of stories, epigrams, and proverbs without end. “Take care,” says one adage, “of the face of a woman and the heels of a mule ; but with a mollah be on your guard at all points.”—“To hate like a mollah,” and “to cheat like a mollah,” are sayings of equal frequency in the mouth of a Persian.

The Seyeds or descendants of the Prophet, notwithstanding their origin, deservedly share in this obloquy ; and should

* That of the Sheik al Islam in Ispahan was 2000 tomans.

one of them have become a hajji,—that is, have made the pilgrimage to Mecca,—his reputation as a rogue is fully established. The correctness of this severe remark is illustrated by innumerable stories. One of these relates, that a man having bought a fine-looking bunch of grapes from a person who sat behind a window, paid his money and laid hold of the end to pull it towards him; but every one of the grapes, which had been artificially fastened on, fell in the inside, leaving him nothing but the bare stalk. "Oh seyed! oh mollah! oh hajji!" exclaimed the disappointed purchaser. "You know me, then!" said the seller, opening his door and coming out. "I never saw you in my life before," returned the other; "but I was quite convinced that no one could have played me such a trick who had not a right to all these holy titles."* It is unnecessary to add, that cazees and other officers connected with the law come in for their full portion of satirical abuse, and not without cause. Every popular tale is full of their corrupt and shameless venality. When men possessing stations so highly responsible, and in general liberally paid by government, are guilty of such mal-practices, what can be expected from the inferior orders, who in misery and want are exposed to a thousand temptations, while their very existence depends on a sanctimonious exterior? Demoralized in the earlier stage of their career, is it to be imagined that, in their rise to the higher ranks of the priesthood or the law, they can avoid becoming hypocrites and profligates? The very extent of ascetic self-denial which they are obliged to observe, whether congenial to their dispositions or otherwise, produces deceit and concealment. "It is with these holy tricks," says Kämpfer, speaking of many of the priests, "that they captivate men's affections, establish a reputation for sanctity, and obtain from the silent suffrages of the people a species of supreme pontificate." Sir John Malcolm, who quotes this passage, thinks the censure too strong; yet it is much to be feared that the conduct even of the higher classes of the priesthood has divested them as a body of the right of just complaint.† That there are many

* Malcolm's Persia, vol. ii. p. 574.

† The writer of these pages was acquainted with a highly-esteemed mowahed at Mahid, who was doubtless, in most respects, an amiable and worthy, as well as a learned man; but, instead of being in reality

bright exceptions, is a fact not less unquestionable than the general truth of the allegation; and the author just named relates a striking instance of the worth of one of these holy persons, and of the consideration which even the most powerful monarchs have testified for their virtues.

An individual once complained to Mollah Ahmed, mooshtehed of Ardebil, that Abbas the Great had taken away his sister, and shut her up by force in his harem. The holy man immediately gave him a note for the king, to the following effect:—"Brother Abbas, restore to the bearer his sister." The monarch commanded the woman immediately to be given up, and showing his courtiers the note, said aloud, "Let this be put into my shroud, for in the day of judgment, having been called brother by Mollah Ahmed will avail me more than all the actions of my life."

The cultivators of the soil, as has been already explained, are those on whom the tyranny of their rulers falls the most heavily. Yet their houses are comfortable and neat, and are seldom found without a supply of good wheaten cakes, some mas or sour milk, and cheese,—often fruit makes its appearance, and sometimes a preparation of meat, in soup or pilau. Their wives and children, as well as themselves, are sufficiently though coarsely clad; and if a guest arrives, there are few who cannot display a numed or felt carpet in a room for his reception. In fact, the high rate of wages proves that the profits of agriculture are high, while food is cheap; and we may be satisfied, that in despite of rapacity, enforced by torture, no small share of the gain is hoarded by the farmer. Extortion and tyranny, like other things, become powerless after a certain point, and counteract their own efforts, although they never fail to beget deceit and falsehood. In spite of all discouraging circumstances, the peasantry possess activity and intelligence; and, even among the rudest, hospitality is seldom found wanting.

Of the women belonging to the classes we have hitherto described we can say little. Females in Mohammedan countries are scarcely more than the slaves of a sensual despot. Yet such is the force of native ingenuity, wit, and strength of mind, that, under all disadvantages, wives frequently suc-

~~The sincere and orthodox Mussulman which the nation believed him, he frankly confessed himself in private a decided freethinker, and smiled at the absurd superstitions of his professed creed.~~

used in gaining a powerful influence over their husbands. Even the king himself has not rarely been directed by the vigorous counsels of a female ; and there are instances where the talents and intrepidity of a woman have upheld the sinking fortunes of a royal dynasty. Still an Eastern harem must ever be the abode of discontent and intrigue, and consequently of misery and crime. No one has painted the horrors of such a prison in more lively colours than Chardin, while describing what he had seen and heard concerning the harem of the shah.

"The seraglio of the king," says he, "is most commonly a perpetual prison, from whence scarce one female in six or seven ever has the good luck to escape ; for women who have once become the mothers of living children are provided with a small establishment within the walls, and are never suffered to leave them. But privation of liberty is by no means the worst evil that exists in these melancholy abodes. Except to that wife who is so fortunate as to produce the first-born son, to become a mother is the most dreaded event that can happen to the wretched favourites of the king. When this occurs, not only do the mothers see their last chance of liberty and marriage cut off from them, but they live in the dreadful anticipation of seeing their children deprived of life or of sight when the death of their lord shall call a new tyrant in the person of his son, the brother of their offspring, to the throne. Should they avoid the misfortune of having children, by an assiduous court paid to the king's mother, or to the mother of his eldest son, it sometimes happens that they attain the good fortune of being bestowed upon some of the officers about the court ; for the ministers and grandees, who are always intriguing with these influential ladies, seldom fail of soliciting a female of the royal harem either for themselves or their sons. Indeed, it is no uncommon thing for the king himself to bestow one of these fair captives upon his favourites or his courtiers, and sometimes when the harem gets crowded, this is done to a great extent, as a measure of economical expediency. Happy is she that is thus freed from her prison, for she at once exchanges the situation of a slave for that of a legitimate and influential wife, and the head of a domestic establishment, when she is ever treated with the attention due to one who has been the favourite of a king."

The temptation of such a chance as this, contrasted with the miserable fate of those who remain immured, drives the captives to the commission of the most horrible crimes. Even new-born innocents are murdered, either by actual violence or the denial of that nourishment which it is a mother's duty and should be her delight to give. Such are the consequences of this iniquitous violation of the laws of nature ; and the number of tragedies is increased by the reluctance with which the royal favour is sometimes received. Chardin relates an instance where Abbas II. ordered a beautiful girl to be burnt alive, by having her tied in the chimney and lighting a fire of wood beneath, while he looked deliberately on, because he had detected her in an artifice to avoid his attentions.

The harems of the great are probably less fruitful in horrors than that of the sovereign in proportion only as power and opportunity are more limited,—the principle is the same in all. But as we descend in the scale of society, and reach the middle and lower orders, this jealous tyranny diminishes ; till at last, in the families of mechanics and villagers, the mysteries of the veil almost disappear, and the wives and daughters of the peasantry pursue their occupations like those of the same class in Europe.

The women of the better ranks are often exceedingly fair, of good complexions, generally full-formed and handsome. The strong admixture of Georgian, Circassian, and Armenian blood, which results from the admission of so many females from these countries into the harems of the wealthy, has tended much to improve the Tartar physiognomy of the rural tribes, and the somewhat heavy figures and sallow colour of the aboriginal Persians. In many instances their eyes are large, black, and languishing ; their lips rich and red, setting off teeth naturally even and white. But they disfigure their proper charms by painting their faces of various colours, of which white and crimson are the least offensive ; constant smoking spoils their mouths and teeth ; and they frequently imprint on their persons fanciful figures, tattooed into the skin. A fine head of hair is reckoned among the most indispensable of female ornaments ; and when nature or accident has deprived them of this, the Persian beauties, like the fair ones of other climes, supply the defect by wearing wigs.

Their dress within the harem is sufficiently simple. A shift of coloured silk or cotton covers the upper part of their

figures, and, together with a pair of zere-jamehs or trousers, compose the principal portion of their attire. Over these they throw a jacket or pelisse, with a shawl, cloak, or furs, according to the state of the weather. Round the head an immense silk handkerchief is wound in a peculiar shape, like a turban. When they go abroad they put on a wrapper of blue checked stuff, which envelops them from head to foot, leaving only a small opening of laced-work, through which the glance of the eye may sometimes be perceived. Yet no husband can recognise his own wife should he meet her. Indeed, it is a point of etiquette among all well-bred Mussulmans to turn aside from a veiled female, so that detection is impossible; and women of all ranks are said to avail themselves of this privilege, in order to enjoy some of that liberty which their lords are disposed to deny them.

The occupations of the sex are few and uninteresting. Ladies of rank meet to talk, gossip, and tell stories; to show each other their finery and jewels, listen to singing-women, and see them dance, or have parties of pleasure at each other's houses. But the bath is the great scene of enjoyment and relaxation, where each, secure from interruption, lays aside restraint, and gives full scope to merriment and scandal. They are utterly wanting in all that delicacy of sentiment and language which is the greatest charm of females in more civilized countries; and, ignorant of what we consider propriety, they express themselves on all subjects with disgusting grossness. Their terms of abuse are indecent in the extreme, and are used with equal fluency by high and low. Where jealousy and intrigue breed constant quarrels, the conversation of a coterie of Persian ladies must of course be intolerable. The domestic pursuits of the middle and lower orders necessarily employ more of their time; but the same causes operating, although less forcibly, produce in proportion the same effects; and we scarce need remark, that women in Persia, as in all other quarters of the globe, are the creatures which circumstances and education have made them. If these have been adverse,—if the softer sex have been basely degraded by their proud and oppressive lords, shall we blame the sufferers for a misfortune which they owe to the tyranny of Eastern customs,—to the injustice of those whose solace in sorrow and suffering they were designed to

be, and who, by every law of nature and manly feeling, were bound to protect them.

We now come to contemplate the fourth class into which we have divided the people ; we mean the tribes, whether partially or wholly erratic, which are dispersed over the greater part of the country. It is true that an immense portion of Asia is inhabited principally by migratory hordes ; and for such persons those wide regions, affording extensive pastures, are peculiarly well suited. But these aboriginal wanderers have generally merged in the body of the natives, wherever a regular government has been established. On the other hand, when a tribe, having risen into power, has its seat of empire in some insulated spot, as the Moguls and the Uzbecks at Bokhara, Khyva, Ferghana, or Cashgar, the nomades swarm around for protection or for service, but seldom intrude among their agricultural or commercial brethren.

In Persia alone we observe the anomaly of a large portion of the people with nomadic habits existing separately from the rest, yet residing in the heart of the community, of which they form a constituent part, supplying the principal military force of the country,—its only hereditary aristocracy,—and, in general, its sovereign himself. These various tribes are bold and free as their brethren of the mighty steppes, from whom many of themselves have sprung,—warlike, rude, quarrelsome, eager for plunder, despising the pacific drudges that occupy the cultivated tracts and cities in the neighbourhood of their wild haunts,—wandering almost at will over pathless deserts, like the wild ass in his plains,—uncertain in their loyalty,—idle and profligate, yet hospitable and generous.

These wandering tribes, it is well known, are of various origins. Those who are indigenous, and form the largest proportion of this class, are found principally in the mountainous tracts of the south, stretching from the entrance of the Gulf, along its shores and the banks of the Tigris, to Kurdistan. Their habits are pastoral, military, and predatory. They speak in general a rude dialect, and what has been called the Kej-Zuban or Barbarous Tongue by the more refined. Among these hordes may be enumerated the Lac, the Feilee, the Buchtiaree, the Lour, each of which is subdivided into many branches, designated by the patronymic of their original progenitor.

The tribes of Arabian descent occupy the low land between the mountains and the Persian Gulf, called the Dushtistan and Chab ; or, having come over with the Mohammedan conquerors, settled and flourished in Balkh and Khorasan, where they still remain a distinct race. Those of the former district speak the language, wear the dress, and generally preserve the customs of the mother-country. Being extremely poor, they are frugal in their diet, and, though scarcely so rude as the aboriginal clans, are nearly as wild and independent as their own ancestors. But although denied the luxuries, and scantly provided with the necessities of life, they are blessed with contentment,—habit has converted parsimony into an enjoyment, and they deem no food so delightful as that to which they are accustomed. An Arab woman, on returning from England, whither she had accompanied the children of the British resident at Bushire, was descanting on the riches and beauty of the kingdom she had visited. She described the roads, the carriages, the fine horses, the splendour and wealth of the cities, and the fertility of the well-cultivated soil. Her audience were full of admiration, and had almost retired in envy, when she happened to mention that there was but one thing wanting to make it perfect. "And what is that ?" said they. "Why, it has not a single date-tree," was the reply. "All the time I was there I never ceased to look for one ; but I looked in vain." The charm was instantly broken,—the Arabs turned away in pity for men who, whatever might be their comforts and magnificence, were condemned to live in a country where there were no date-trees.

The first appearance in Persia of the Turkish hordes is said to have taken place early in the seventh century, when a tribe named Khozars, under their chief Zubeel, issuing from the plains of the Volga, joined the Emperor Heraclius in Georgia, and entering with him, obtained a permanent footing. Since that period, various races, by families, by armies, or by nations, from the deserts beyond the Oxus, and from the banks of the Volga, have poured periodically into the country. The Parthians themselves are supposed to be of Scythian origin. Next came the dynasties of Saman, of Ghizni, and of Seljuk, who were descended from Turkmans. Then came the Moguls under Zingis, the Turks under Timur, and, finally, the Uzbeks. Besides these great

inroads, many tribes, being pressed forward by an over-abundant population, have settled in Mavar al Nahar, and in the desert between that province and Khorasan, whence they have insinuated themselves into Persia. From these various marauders the noblest of the military clans have sprung. Thus the Kujurs (the ruling race at this day) and the Kara Tartars came in with Timur; the Ghileechee of Subzawar in Khorasan derive from the stock of Tocktamish, the ruler of Kipchauk; and doubtless they accompanied that chief when he invaded Persia about the end of the fourteenth century.

The inhabitants of Kurdestan lay claim to an origin different from all these. Some believe them to be the progeny of those persons who were saved from the cruelty of Zohauk; others think that they are the offspring of earthly women by the Jin or Genii of the Air. There is at all events no question of their great antiquity; for it would appear that they differ little, if at all, from their ancestors the brave Carduchi, whose manners are so graphically described by Xenophon in the celebrated retreat of the Ten Thousand.

In addition to those already enumerated may be mentioned the tribes that inhabit the Elburz range which overhangs the Caspian Sea, particularly the mountaineers of Talish. These, however, though occupying a northern province, may more properly be classed among the native tribes of Persia.

It has been already observed that these various communities furnish the military strength of the country. The young chiefs, educated at court, where they are retained as hostages for the fidelity of their clan, acquire a specious politeness,—a facility of dissimulation which, grafted on a naturally rude and haughty stock, produces a character in which little honesty or real worth is to be found. As they advance in years, they either obtain appointments civil or military, or, not less commonly, retire to their native districts, leaving their sons to undergo the same course of training.

In their own country, surrounded by their people, the chiefs are seen to advantage. The immediate inducement to dissimulation being removed, they show more frankness and generosity than usually belong to courtiers. Many of them are liberal, hospitable, bold, and intrepid; though the slightest provocation calls forth their native arrogance. Overbearing and passionate to excess, their fury knows no

bounds ; neither decency nor prudence restrains them. But so well is this failing known, that the sovereign himself, should he have been the object of their intemperance, seldom does more than smile and forgive the offender, when he pleads that he is an Eeliautee. (a man of a wandering clan). "I once," says Sir John Malcolm, "heard a nobleman of one of these tribes use the most violent and insulting language, when speaking of the prime minister ; and his imprudence seemed the greater, as some of the minister's particular friends were present. Apprehensive of the consequence, I next day asked him if any thing had happened ? 'It is all settled,' said he, 'I have made an apology. I told the minister that I was an Eeliautee, and that, you know,' added he, laughing, 'is an excuse for any thing wrong a man can say or do.'"

The people resemble their chiefs in their rude and barbarous independence, in their savage recklessness of blood, and their insatiable thirst for rapine. Those who remain in the tents, or at the dwelling-places of the tribes, are generally brought up in ignorance of every thing but martial exercises, and the other occupations of an Eeliaut, among which the Lacedemonian accomplishments of stealing adroitly and bearing pain with constancy are not forgotten. Unable from poverty to gratify their passions, yet untaught to subdue them, their excesses, when an opportunity offers, are frightful. With the precepts or practice of religion they are for the most part entirely unacquainted, and scarcely observe its slightest external forms.* They do not even abstain from forbidden food,† and many go so far as to satisfy their appetites

* A Persian writer of piety and learning mentions, that a citizen who was the guest of one of these barbarians, when he began one morning, according to his custom, to read aloud a chapter of the Koran, was assailed with a stick by his host's wife, who asked him in a rage if he imagined any of the family to be dead, that he thought it necessary to read that book ? The husband, while reproving the violence of his wife, blamed also his friend, saying, that he should have known better than to anticipate misfortune by going through a ceremony *only used at funerals*.

† Sir John Malcolm relates, that one day some Affshar youths having voluntarily joined in the chase of a hare started by some gentlemen of the mission, a dog belonging to one of them caught it after a hard chase over some dangerous ground. The youth immediately tied it to his saddle. "Why do you do so?" inquired one of the English party, "you can't eat it, you know it is mukrooh (abominable) to a Mussulman."—"Not eat it," said he, "do you think I have hazarded my life, and half

tites with the flesh of swine. A Kurd who one day had entered with freedom into conversation with an English gentleman, observed, that for his part, he thought the religion of his tribe resembled that of the Franks more than of the Persians. "How so?" inquired the Englishman. "Why," replied the other, "we eat hog's flesh, drink wine, keep no fasts, and say no prayers."* He had observed no public acts of worship among the British, and imagined that they never performed any.

These wandering hordes glory in the name of plunderers, but resent the appellation of thief. The difference is obvious,—robbery implies the open and successful exertion of strength,—stealing a consciousness of weakness. Next to being engaged in scenes of pillaging, they love to recount those they have witnessed, and boast of the most atrocious deeds as heroic and praiseworthy. "I happened one day," says Sir John Malcolm, "when on the march to Sultanieh, to ask a chief of one of the tribes what ruins those were upon the right of our road? His eyes glistened at the question. 'It is more than twenty years,' said he, 'since I accompanied my uncle in a night-attack to plunder and destroy that very village, and it has never been rebuilt. Its inhabitants, who are a bad race and our enemies, have settled near it, and are again grown rich. I trust in God these days of tranquillity will not last long; and if old times return, I shall have another blow at these gentlemen before I die.'"

The sketch given by an Affshar chief of his own family throws some light on their customs:—"My father had two brothers, one older, the other younger than himself. These four young men you see there are grandsons of my eldest uncle, who was head of the family,—their oldest brother commands a troop of horse, all of the tribe of Affshar, with the king,—and this is my cousin, the son of my younger uncle. My family consists of six children, all except one by the same mother, my wife, daughter of Futeh Ali Khan Affshar, a famous chief, who, on the death of Nadir Shah (who,

killed my horse and dog, to be deterred from eating this hare by what some one of a mollish has said? I would eat his father," added he, laughing, and rode off with his prize.

* Some of the lower attendants in India, when asked "Of what caste they are?" have been known partly to reply, "Of master's caste," upon a similar sort of principle.

you know, was of our tribe), aspired to the throne. My good father-in-law, however, lost his life in attempting to become a king, and I married his orphan daughter, an excellent woman, but who carries her head rather high, as no doubt she has a right to do, from the recollection of her father's pretensions. Look," said he, softly, for the interior apartments were within ear-shot, "look at that youngster at the other end of the room : he is my son. His mother was the daughter of a jeweller at Ispahan, an uncommonly pretty girl. He is a fine lad, but I dare hardly notice him ; and he is, you observe, not allowed to sit within ten yards of the grandsons of Futeh Ali Khan Affshar. This is all very proper," he added ; "it is attention to the dam as well as the sire that keeps the breed good. Besides, the influence of females among us Eeliarts is very great, and if we did not treat them with respect, matters would not be long right. My father and his brothers lived together," continued he, "and we do the same. Our inheritance was equal, and each of the three branches is charged a day's expenditure successively. Entertainments and imposts are paid in equal shares. We seek by intermarriages to strengthen those ties, which are our only defence against oppression and destruction. We are Turks," he concluded, laughing, "and, consequently, you may suppose, have often violent quarrels ; but the necessity of our condition soon reconciles us again, and we are at present, and will, I hope, long continue, a united family."*

The migratory subjects of Persia differ from the fixed population in no respect more than in devotedness to their chiefs and in family affection. In the former they are not exceeded by that which was borne of old by Highland clansmen to their feudal lords. Of the other an affecting instance is given by the elegant author from whose pages we have lately quoted.

In the reign of Kureem Khan, twelve men were robbed and murdered under the walls of Shiraz. The perpetrators could not for a long time be discovered ; but the king, resolving to make an example for the sake of good order, commanded the officers of justice to persevere, under heavy threats, until a matter which so much concerned his

* Sketches of Persia, vol. ii. chap. 14.

own reputation should be brought to light. At length, by accident, it was found out that a small branch of Kureem's own tribe of Zund were the guilty persons. Their crime was clearly proved, and, in spite of powerful intercession, all actually engaged in the murder were condemned to die. The circumstance that they were of the king's own clan made their case worse : they had dishonoured their sovereign, and could not be forgiven. When the prisoners were brought before the monarch to be sentenced and executed, there was among them a youth, twenty years of age, whose appearance excited universal interest ; but this anxiety was increased to pain when his father rushed forward and demanded, before they were led to death, to speak with the prince. Permission was easily obtained, and he addressed the monarch as follows :—"Kureem Khan ! you have sworn that these guilty men shall die, and it is just they should suffer ; but I, who am not guilty, come here to demand a boon of my chief. My son is young,—he has been deluded into crime ; his life is forfeited,—but he has hardly tasted the sweets of existence. He is just betrothed in marriage : I come to die in his stead. Be merciful !—let an old worn-out man perish, and spare a youth who may long be useful to his tribe ; let him live to drink of the waters and till the ground of his ancestors !" The shah was deeply moved by this appeal : to pardon the offence was impossible, for he had sworn on the Koran that all concerned should die. With feelings very different from our ideas of justice, but congenial to those of the chief of a tribe, he granted the father's prayer, and the old man went exultingly to meet his fate ; while the son, wild and distracted with grief, loudly called on the prince to reverse his decree, —to inflict on him the doom he merited, and save the life of his aged and innocent parent.

The sketches here given apply to those tribes who preserve the manners of their forefathers ; but there are some who have approximated very nearly to those of the native Persians. The change, however, seldom tends to their improvement ; on the contrary, the Eelauts who settle in towns, so far from resisting temptation, exceed the worst of the citizens in profligacy.

The occupations of the wandering families when at peace are principally pastoral. They live on the produce of their flocks and herds. Black bread, sour milk with curds, and

occasionally a little meat, are their general diet; and though they do not abjure wine, they seldom indulge in any intoxicating liquor. The number which go in a body depends on the extent of pasture they can command. They encamp usually in form of a square or street, the abode of the chief being in the centre. But they often pitch without any regard to order by the banks of some rivulet; and, if weak, in a situation which admits of a speedy retreat to the hills. The traveller, reaching some eminence which overlooks the valley, may see their black tents, like spiders' webs, stretched on the ground in clusters, and horses, camels, mules, sheep, and cattle, ranging at large around. The young men employ themselves in military exercises, hunt, or sit in circles smoking and listening to songs and tales, or gazing at the tricks and grimaces of buffoons, some of whom are very skilful. The women meanwhile spin, weave carpets and cloth, bake, or prepare the dairy produce. The old men and boys look after the flocks.

When the pastures are bare they shift to some other spot. The march of one of these parties is a striking spectacle. The main body is generally preceded by an advanced guard of stout young men well armed, as if to clear the way; then follow large flocks of all kinds of domestic animals, covering the country far and wide, and driven by the lads of the community. The asses, which are numerous, and the rough stout yahoos,* are loaded with goods, tents, clothes, pots and boilers, and every sort of utensil, bound confusedly together. On the top of some of the burdens may be seen mounted the elder children, who act the part of drivers; on others the lesser urchins, not able to speak, yet quite at their ease,—neither seeking nor receiving attention, but holding on manfully with feet and hands. A third class of animals bear the superannuated of the tribe, bent double with age, and hardly distinguishable from the mass of rags that forms their seat. The young men and women bustle about, preventing, with the assistance of their huge dogs, their cattle from straying too far. The mothers, carrying the younger infants, patiently trudge along on foot, watching the progress of their domestic equipage. The men, with sober, thoughtful demeanour, armed to the teeth and duly prepared for

* A small horse—*Scattice, garron.*

action, walk steadily on the flanks and rear of the grotesque column, guarding and controlling its slow but regular movements.

It is not safe for travellers slightly protected to meet such companies on their march. The writer of these pages, on his way to Shiraz, being in advance of his friends, in the gray of the morning, observed one or two men appear from a hollow near at hand. Their numbers rapidly increased to fifteen or sixteen well-armed fellows, who quickly approached; a halt was called until the party came up, during which they stood eying the strangers, balancing as it were the expediency of an attack. Apparently they distrusted the result, and sent one of their body forward to parley. They said they were from the encampment of a neighbouring tribe on a search for strayed cattle; and they went away in another direction. "That may or may not be true," observed one of the attendants, himself an old freebooter; "but these fellows once on foot will not return as they came; their own or another's they will have: they dare not go home to their wives empty-handed."

The author has frequently paused to view such a primitive procession, and to mark the wild and picturesque figures which formed its groups. Their features, as well as their costume, are altogether peculiar. However fair the natural complexion,—and the infants are nearly as white as Europeans,—exposure turns their skin to a dark mahogany hue, approaching to black; though a deep ruddy tinge pervades this brown mask, imparting a pleasing tone of health and vigour. The men have well-made powerful frames, piercing black eyes, noses generally aquiline, and frequently over-hanging their thick mustachios, which, united with a black bushy beard, almost entirely conceal their mouths. Their dress consists of a coarse blue shirt and trousers, with heavy cloaks thrown over the shoulders, the sleeves being left unoccupied; a conical cap of white or gray felt, with flaps for the ears, covers their head. They usually carry a gun, and sometimes two, slung across the back. A large knife or dagger in the girdle, and a sword or clubbed stick, completes their equipment. Their whole aspect is strongly characteristic of health, hardihood, and independence; while their wild stare marks the total want of polish, courtesy, or civilization.

The young women have quite the gipsy cast of countenance, and are often very handsome. A sweet nutbrown hue, warmed with vivid crimson, the effect of exercise in the open air, marks their usual complexion. Their eyes, like those of the men, are dark and expressive ; the nose is well formed and delicate : the mouth is small, set off with white teeth and a lurking smile, the herald of good-humour ; while the outline of a fine and slender shape is often to be detected through the rags that hang about their persons. Nothing, indeed, can be more ungraceful than their attire. A patched pair of trousers, often of very limited dimensions ; a loose shift of blue or white cotton, the skirts of which do not nearly reach the knee ; and a species of mantle thrown over the head and shoulders, crossing the brow like a band and flowing a certain way down the back, comprise the principal part of their apparel. They wrap also round the head a handkerchief or bunch of cloth, in place of a turban ; and this dress, varied in its appearance by frequent repairs, is common to all the females of the tribes. They soon lose their beauty, becoming of a coarse sunburnt red ; the next change is to a parched and withered brown ; and the shrivelled grandams of the Eeliants, with their hook-nosed and skinny countenances, realize in perfection all that is imagined of hags and witches.

The women of the tribes who live in tents do not, like other Mohammedans, assume the veil, although those who dwell in villages may in some degree comply with the customs of more civilized society. They share the fatigues and dangers of the men, and the masculine manners they thus acquire are suited to their mode of life. Except in cases of high rank, they perform all the domestic and even menial duties ; and strangers arriving at their tents are sure of receiving a kind though modest welcome from them. Yet all this is performed in a manner which precludes the slightest mistake as to its motive ; for chastity is as much prized in females as courage among the men, and he who should presume on their innocent frankness would to his cost discover his error.

An interesting proof of their boldness and skill is related by Sir John Malcolm, who had expressed some doubts on the subject as he was riding near a small encampment of Eeliants. The Persian noble who accompanied him immediately called

out to a young woman of handsome appearance, and asked her in Turkish if she was not a soldier's daughter? She said she was. "And you expect to be a mother of soldiers?" was the next observation. A smile was the reply. "Mount that horse," said he, pointing to one with a bridle but without a saddle, "and show this European elchee the difference between a girl of a tribe and a citizen's daughter." She instantly sprung upon the animal, and, setting off at full speed, did not stop till she had reached the summit of a small hill in the vicinity, which was covered with loose stones. When there, she waved her hand over her head, and came down at the same rate she had ascended. No ground could be more dangerous; but she appeared quite fearless, and seemed delighted at having had an opportunity of proving the superiority of the nomade females over those of the cities.*

The Kurdish hordes differ little in the essential points of character from the other native inhabitants of Persia. Although there are several cities in their country, the military clans are not often found to inhabit them, nor do they assemble in large encampments except for purposes of war. Indeed, whether in tents or houses, they seldom dwell together in larger numbers than are comprised in a few families. To this custom, so adverse to the progress of improvement, some refer the fact that their condition and manners have experienced so little change during more than twenty centuries.† Neither civilization nor conquest has ever penetrated the wilds of Kurdistan. The inhabitants have preferred their barbarous freedom to the refined enjoyments which they saw to be so frequently accompanied with softness and slavery. In Senna, Solymaneah, Betlis, and other towns, there are mosques and priests, and in these the written law is administered as in other parts of Persia. But in general they continue to be governed by the usages of their forefathers; yielding implicit obedience to their chief, which he repays by protection, exercising his authority on all occasions with strict regard to their customs and prejudices.

As has been already said, they have little regard to the ordinances of religion: and in like manner their allegiance to the king is extremely slight and doubtful, being generally measured by their power of resisting the royal authority.

* History of Persia, vol. ii. p. 615. . . . † Ibid. vol. ii. p. 407.

The Wallee of Ardelan keeps a court at Senna in princely state, and maintains a considerable military array. The great delight of the Kurds is in arms and fine horses, in the management of which they excel. Colonel M'Donald Kinneir gives a lively account of the appearance of these warriors :—" When a Kurdish chief takes the field, his equipment varies little from that of the knights in the days of chivalry ; and the Saracen who fought under the great Saladin was probably armed in the very same manner as he who now makes war upon the Persians. His breast is defended by a steel corslet inlaid with gold and silver ; while a small wooden shield, thickly studded with brass nails, is slung over his left shoulder when not in use. His lance is carried by his page or squire, who is also mounted ; a carbine is slung across his back ; his pistols and dagger are stuck in his girdle, and a light scimitar hangs by his side. Attached to the saddle, on the right, is a small case holding three darts, each about two feet and a half in length : and on the left, at the saddlebow, you perceive a mace, the most deadly of all his weapons. It is two feet and a half in length ; sometimes embossed with gold, at others set with precious stones. The darts have steel points about six inches long, and a weighty piece of iron or lead at the upper part to give them velocity when thrown by the hand."

Our remarks on the tribes would be incomplete without some notice of those fierce plunderers who roam the desert eastward of the Caspian Sea, between the Elburz Mountains and the Oxus. In a work by the author of these pages,* a full account of them has been given, and some conjectures hazarded regarding the causes which have rendered them so much more ferocious than the nomadic people of other regions.

The Yamoots, Gocklans, and Tuckehs, who inhabit the skirts of those mountains and the desert which lies at their feet, are probably the successors of former tribes who, themselves poured forth from the teeming storehouses of the North, have advanced as opportunity occurred farther into the cultivated country. Their customs and character differ considerably from those of the Eelians. They are more erratic, seldom remaining in a station beyond a few days.

* *Travels in Khorasan*, p. 254, &c seq.

They encamp in parties varying from thirty to one hundred and fifty families, each body having its Reish Suffed or Elder, to whom considerable respect is paid, whose advice is generally followed in matters affecting the common interests, and who adjusts petty disputes. But they have no governors, chiefs, or nobles; and no one attempts to arrogate any higher authority than that with which he is invested by the public voice.

The habits of these people are extremely simple. Every one, great and small, enters a tent with the salutation of peace, and takes his seat unceremoniously. They pique themselves upon hospitality; they will almost quarrel for the privilege of entertaining a stranger who approaches as a friend; and some aver that such a guest is safe from all aggression in the camp, and when he departs is furnished with a guide to the next stage on his journey. Others deny this, and bid travellers distrust the fairest promises of the Turkomans.

The women are not concealed like those of the Persians. They wear on the lower part of the face a silk or cotton veil, which, coving the mouth and chin, hangs down upon the breast. They frequently put on the head a very high cap glittering with ornaments, and over it a silk handkerchief of some gaudy colour. They have earrings; and the hair, long and plaited, falls in four divisions in front and behind the shoulders. Their persons are clad in loose shirts and vests with sleeves, and drawers of silk or cotton. The children and young women are sometimes beautiful, but in general much the reverse; and the virtue of the latter is not so favourably spoken of as that of the Eeliaut ladies.

The men of these several tribes differ slightly from each other in appearance; though the features of all approach more or less to the Tartar physiognomy, having small eyes set cornerwise, little flat noses, high cheekbones, and a scanty beard or none at all. They wear loose shirts and cloaks bound round the waist with a sash, drawers of cotton or silk, and caps of sheep-skin,—red, gray, or black, according to the fancy of the wearer. They are provided with a spear and sword, bows and arrows, and some have matchlocks; but in parting with the arms they have lost the unerring skill of their forefathers, without having yet acquired the full use of more modern weapons.

The Turkomans are rich in flocks and herds of every kind, but they value most their noble breed of horses. These animals are celebrated all over Persia for speed and power of endurance. Their large heads, long necks, bodies, and legs, combined with narrow chests, do not impress a stranger with high ideas of their value; although their powerful quarters, fine shoulders, and the cleanliness of their limbs, would not fail to attract the eye of a competent judge; and experience has shown, that for a long-continued effort no horse can compare with that of the desert. In training, they run them many miles day after day, feed them sparingly on plain barley, and pile warm coverings upon them at night to sweat them, until every particle of fat is removed, and the flesh becomes hard and tendinous; so that, to use their own expression, "the flesh is marble." After this treatment they are capable of travelling with wonderful speed a long time, without losing condition or sinking under fatigue. They are also taught to aid their riders with heel and mouth; so that at the voice of their master they seize hold of an enemy, and even chase a fugitive.

Thus mounted, the Turkomans, in larger or smaller bodies, according to the object in view, and under a chief chosen for the occasion, set off on their chappows (or plundering parties),—a term that causes many a villager in Khorasan, and even in Irak, to tremble with dismay. Carrying behind their saddles a scanty allowance of barley bread or meal, to serve themselves and their horses for a week—for they fare alike—they march day and night, with intervals of not more than an hour's halt at morning and evening prayer. In this way they reach with astonishing celerity the outskirts of the place to be attacked. This is often 400 or 500 miles from their homes,—a distance which they travel at the rate of 80 or 100 miles a-day. A chappow that destroyed, while the author was at Mushed, a village near Ghorian, forty miles from Herat, must have marched fully five hundred miles.

Arrived at the vicinity of their destined prey, if a small town, they halt in some hollow near it, and wait in silence till the dawn, when the inhabitants open their gates and issue forth on their various occupations. At once the fearful Turkoman shout is heard, and the grim band, dashing from their lurking-places, seize all they can get hold of, cut down those who resist, plunder the houses, and, binding the booty

on the cattle they have secured, retreat like the passing blast, before the neighbourhood can receive the alarm.

Should the object of attack be a caravan, they conceal themselves in some ravine near its course; scouts are stationed unseen on the heights around; and when the devoted travellers reach the ambuscade, the barbarians dart upon them with a rapidity that defies resistance or escape, bear down every opposition, and bind as prisoners all on whom they can lay hands. Then begins the work of plunder, and generally of blood. Those who are old and unfit for work are massacred; the cattle not likely to be useful in the retreat are disabled or cut to pieces; the goods thought worth the carriage are placed as loads upon the rest; and an immediate retreat is commenced. The captives, with their hands tied behind them, are fastened by ropes to the saddles of the Turkomans, who, if they do not move fast, drive them on with heavy blows. Whatever be the state of the weather, the wretches are stripped to the drawers; even shoes are seldom left to them; and they are never accommodated with a horse unless pursuit renders it necessary. With equal rapidity they return home, and lodge both booty and prisoners, in their desert abodes; and the latter in due time find a hopeless thraldom, or a happy release, though at an exorbitant ransom, in the market-places of Bokhara or of Khyvah.*

Such are the Turkomans of the Northern Desert, fierce, rapacious, unfeeling, and often perfidious; but hardy, persevering, and brave, the scourge of Khorasan and the terror of its feeble rulers.

The general character of the Persian people may be gathered from the preceding remarks. The dark side of the picture presents them as unprincipled, deceitful, corrupt, rapacious, deficient in courage as well as in feelings of honour, insensible to shame, and indifferent to the commission of crime in the pursuit of ambition or wealth. This melancholy catalogue of vices arises from the disadvantages in point of religion, of government, and the general structure of

* Many sorts of singular appearance are found in the districts bordering on the desert, which have for ages protected the inhabitants against these destructive chappows. They are masses of mud, of which it would be difficult to pronounce whether they are natural or artificial; but their scarped and elevated sides defy the transitory efforts of the Turkomans, and the residents remain secure in their huts or burrows upon their summits.

society under which they have laboured for so many ages. Indeed, deceit and falsehood are charges which they do not deny. "Believe me, for though a Persian, I am speaking truth," is a common exclamation to those who doubt their veracity; and there are few travellers we believe, who have not heard them admit their own proneness both to falsehood and venality. To give the lie direct is not deemed an insult; "Een durogh nast," (It is a lie), is as common an expression, used without offence from one Persian to another, as "Gou khourd" (He has eaten filth, equivalent to He has lied), is in speaking of another, even in the highest ranks.

In enumerating want of courage among the national defects, exception ought perhaps to be made in favour of some military tribes, particularly those of Kurdistan. It is certain that under warlike princes these men were brave and intrepid; but we speak of the country as it is now, not as it has been; and there is not a doubt that the spirit of an army will always be in some proportion to the genius and gallantry of its leader. There is one characteristic which, although common to all Mohammedans, cannot be passed in silence. We allude to that love of private revenge, which occasions so much slaughter and so many sanguinary feuds. This savage propensity, nourished by custom and false honour, and strengthened by that stern precept which enjoins "blood for blood," although it obtains more universally among the tribes, is still very widely diffused throughout all ranks of the people. Even the heavy punishment awarded by law tends rather to promote crime and encourage evil passions than to prevent quarrels; for, on the one hand, avarice in its worst form is gratified by receiving the price of blood, or, on the other, cruelty is satiated by the unlimited power which is granted over the offender.

We fear that the catalogue of Persian virtues is almost entirely confined to the charms of their social character and hospitality. They are courteous, certainly, when it suits them to be so; but politeness with them consists principally in hyperbolical phrases and a certain submissiveness of manner, which, when they attempt to gain the favour of their superiors or some point of interest, are pushed even to servility. Hospitality is a feeling common to many Asiatic nations, and enjoined by the religion of Mohammed; and in Persia a very extensive exercise of its duties may unquestionably be remarked, not only among the tribes and peasantry, but also in

towns and cities. While the late prime-minister, a worthy and benevolent man, was cheapening some articles one day with a peasant who had been introduced to sell them, breakfast happened to be brought in. "Come, my friend," said the khan, "we shall settle that by-and-by; but in the mean time sit down and take your breakfast;" so the countryman sat down and partook of the minister's pillau, and afterward made the best bargain he could for his goods.

Before taking leave of this subject, we shall advert to a few of those peculiar customs which sometimes serve to portray the genius and dispositions of a people as strikingly as more important particulars.

We have observed that the Persians are cheerful and social. The visits of private individuals are not more fettered by forms than a morning call in Europe; and although in larger parties and public meetings more attention to established rules of behaviour may prevail, there is nothing of that imperturbable taciturnity and apathetic abstraction which characterize an assembly of Turks.

At meetings of friends, ceremonious compliments are of course in a greater or less degree dispensed with. The Mohammedan salutation, "Salaam Aleicom!" (Peace be with you!) is replied to by the exclamation, "Aleicom Salaam!" (With thee be peace!). The customary inquiries about each other's health succeed; but to ask after that of one's family, especially of the females, would be an unpardonable affront. The bughulgeeree, or the embracing and kissing thrice on each cheek, takes place between relatives and dear friends after long absence—and then with a "Bismillah!" (In the name of God!) the parties sit down and enter into conversation. Calleeoons, a sort of pipe, the smoke of which is mellowed by being drawn through water, are called for, and immediately all formalities cease.

When the visit is one of ceremony, the master of the house receives his guest in the dewan khaneh, or public room, seated at the upper end, generally at a large window which reaches from the lofty ceiling to within a foot of the ground and looks out into a garden. The floor is covered with fine carpets, and around the farther extremity and down one aisle are spread thick mumuds or pieces of flowered felt, from four to six feet broad, on which the company sit. Should the weather be cold, or the host desirous to confer upon the visitor particular

honour, he receives him in a more retired apartment, in which is a cheerful fire, the seat next to which is esteemed the place of distinction.

The stranger leaves his slippers at the door of the room, and upon entering makes an inclination with his body, placing his right hand on his heart, and uttering the usual salutation. His host rising, makes the customary rejoinder, adding, "Koosh Amedeed!" ("You are welcome!") and advances more or less to meet him, according to his rank. If an equal, he remains standing until the other comes up. If somewhat his superior, he goes to the edge of the carpet on which he was sitting, and if he possess a decidedly higher rank, he receives him at the door. To an inferior he merely makes a movement as if to rise; while an inclination of the head, or the more familiar nod, mark the reception of such as are still lower.

After smoking a little tobacco, coffee, which is usually strong and without milk or sugar, is presented in small china cups, often set in others of silver, or even of gold; and if the host wish to treat his guest with distinguished politeness, he takes a cup from the attendant, and offers it himself with both hands. By way of uncommon favour he sometimes takes the pot, and, shaking up the grounds, pours the whole out for the stranger. A second calleecoon is then used; and in a short space afterward a cup of sweet sherbet,—sometimes of tea, highly sweetened but without milk, is handed round. A third calleecoon is the signal for departure; and in the intercourse of even the most familiar acquaintances the parting pipe is always called for, generally by him who goes, and is often resisted by the other, on the plea of detaining his friend longer; but neither meeting nor parting takes place without this civility. In the case, indeed, of visits made by inferiors to members of the royal family or persons of quality, the calleecoon is only given to the great man, not to the others; and where one or more of the company is of high rank, both coffee and pipes are served by the bearers upon their knees.

In the performance of this prescribed round of civilities, good breeding demands that the guest, whatever be his taste or habits, should accept courteously any thing that is offered, although he should return it almost untasted. But as many Persians do not use tobacco, it is common in unceremonious parties to decline the calleecoon with a polite gesture, saying,

"I do not smoke." Visitors also regulate the time of smoking by observing the master of the house : none keep their pipe after he has returned his to the calleeoenchee. During all this period conversation proceeds, and is formal or animated, in proportion as those met together are more or less at their ease and on a level with each other.

When a person of rank gives his friends an entertainment, the company is generally received in the dewan khaneh ; a piece of chintz or printed calico is spread in front of the felt carpets, on which they are seated. It is never washed, for such a change would be deemed unlucky, and therefore appears with all the signs of frequent and hospitable use. On this cloth, before each person, is laid a cake of bread, which serves the purpose of a plate. The dishes are brought in on large metal trays,—one of which is generally set down between every two or three individuals,—and contain pilaws, stews, sweetmeats, and other delicacies ; while bowls of sweet and sour sherbets, with long-handled spoons of pear-tree wood swimming in them, are placed within their reach. If the feast be very sumptuous, the dainties appear in great profusion, and are sometimes heaped one upon another. The cookery is excellent of its kind, though there is throughout the whole arrangement, a mixture of refinement and uncouthness, highly characteristic of the country. Persians, like other orientals, eat with their fingers ; and the meat is cut into convenient mouthfuls, or stewed down so as to be easily torn to pieces. Accordingly, no sooner is the "Biamillah" pronounced, than, bending forward, every hand is in a moment up to the knuckles in the rich pilaws,—pinching or tearing off fragments of omelettes,—stripping the kubaube from their little skewers,—plunging into savoury stews,—dipping into dishes of sweetmeats,—and tossing off spoonfuls of the pleasant sherbet. The profound silence is only interrupted by the rapid movement of jaws, or the grunts of deep satisfaction that from time to time arise from the gourmands of the party ; for, though this people are temperate on common occasions, none enjoy more the pleasures of the table at convenient seasons. At length the host or principal guest, having satisfied his appetite, rises from his recumbent posture, and throwing himself back on his seat, utters a deep guttural "Alhumdulallah," and remains holding his greasy hand across the other until an attendant brings water. On this the remaining visitors,

one after another, as fast as the struggle between appetite and decorum permits, assume the same attitude. Warm water is brought in ewers, and poured over the dirty fingers, which are held above a basin to catch the drippings, but are generally very imperfectly wiped. Order is gradually restored ; calleeoons are produced ; the company take each the posture that pleases them best, consonant with due respect ; and conversation becomes general.

At such entertainments the comfort and hilarity of the party depend entirely on the object of the feast. When given to some high grandee, the whole affair is magnificent, stiff, and dull. The court is spread with rich cloths for him to tread upon, which become the property of his servants ; he is placed in the highest seat, far above all the guests : even the master of the house sits below him at a respectful distance ; all look to him for the tone of feeling which is to prevail ;—if he speaks so do the rest,—if he smile they laugh at his good sayings,—if he be silent and reserved, a corresponding gloom ensues. Every one curses his presence, and heartily wishes him gone. On the contrary, when there is no such constraint, and when the entertainer is a pleasant, open-hearted person, mirth and good-humour abound,—wit and repartee are indulged—stories and anecdotes are told,—and abundance of poetry is repeated.

But the relaxation to which the middle classes are most attached is, to retire, after the fatigues of the day, to some shady, well-watered garden near the city, and to devote their leisure to the delights of ease and social enjoyments. In such places parties of friends may frequently be seen sitting under the trees, smoking calleeoons, and listening to the odes of their most admired poets or to the tales of a kissago, and often solacing themselves by copious libations from the wine-cup. In truth, many of the Persians are great topers, in spite of the prohibitions of their Prophet ; and when they betake themselves to this kind of pastime, they seldom stop short of absolute intoxication. It is, in fact, the pleasure of positive inebriation they seek, not that gentle exhilaration which the moderate use of wine produces, and the zest it adds to conversation and society. They see no disgrace in drunkenness, and envy Christians the supposed privilege of getting tipsy when they choose without check or reproach.

The pleasures of the harem are the first in the estimation

of a Persian noble ; those of horses, arms, dress, equipage, come next. They love splendid apartments, covered with rich carpets, perfumed by flower-gardens, and refreshed with sparkling fountains ; and there they assemble to drink coffee, or more probably wine,—to smoke, and feast their friends. Illuminations and fireworks ; wrestlers, jugglers, and buffoons ; puppetshows, musicians, and dancing or tumbling boys, are called in to furnish the amusement of the rich in their dewan khanehs, as of the poor in their bazaars and market-places ; and, although dancing-girls are prohibited at court by the reigning sovereign, and are not seen in the capital, an entertainment in the distant provinces is scarcely held complete without a display of their talents.

The bath is of all others the luxury most extensively enjoyed ; for a few copper coins enable the poorest to avail themselves of this healthful pleasure, so necessary to a people who are not over-nice in the use of their linen. The bath is, in fact, the lounge of the Persians, as the alehouse is in England, or the coffee-houses in Turkey ; for as the operation of bathing, which includes that of kneading the muscles, cracking the joints, shaving the head, trimming and dying the beard, and, tinging the hands and feet with henna, occupies from two to three hours at least, during great part of which the patient lies stretched on his back to permit the dyes to fix, he employs the time in hearing the news, in smoking, drinking coffee, or in sleeping. The public baths are open two days of the week exclusively for women, and the remaining five for men. They are frequented as early as three or four in the morning, and continue so for the greater part of the day, and sometimes of the night. People of rank usually have baths attached to their houses, which, however, they occasionally let out to the public, with the reserve of certain days for their own use.

One of the most unaccountable peculiarities of the Persians is, the ease with which they change from a state of perfect sloth to one of the greatest activity. For weeks together they sit on carpets, engrossed with their favourite calceoon or the pleasures of the anderoon, without once moving out of doors. Nay, they look with astonishment on what they deem the restless nature of an Englishman ; and when they see him walk about a room when he might sit still, they ask “ if he be possessed with an evil spirit ? ” Yet,

let a cause of excitement occur, and these same indolent persons mount on horseback and ride, with scarcely any rest to man or beast, days and nights together, without suffering even from fatigue. Horses are in truth the delight, and one of the principal articles of expense to the Persians, who may well be said to be a nation of cavalry. The royal menage, which of course is filled with multitudes of the finest animals of every breed, from the Arabian of the south to the Turkoman of the north, is placed under the direction of an officer called Meerachor, or Lord of the Stable. Those of inferior degree content themselves with Jeloodars, or Holders of the Rein, who are in fact principal grooms, having under them an assistant for every two or three horses. These persons are always mounted, and on the march generally have charge each of a led steed sumptuously caparisoned,—a part of the state of a great man which is never forgotten, and sometimes carried to extravagance both as to number and equipage.

These horses are, however, by no means kept entirely as appendages of state. The Persians are devotedly fond of hunting, and never spare their coursers in that exercise. The most interesting game, because the most difficult to take, is the gourkhur, or wild ass, which is so strong and fleet that neither horse nor dog unaided has any chance of overtaking it. They therefore ascertain beforehand where it feeds, and, placing relays of huntsmen and hounds at stated distances, drive it towards them; so that it is at length run down by successive parties.

A similar plan is adopted to catch the antelope, which at first starting outstrips all pursuit. But sometimes they prefer surrounding the plain where it is known to graze with horsemen, each having a dog in the slip; so that whichever way the animal runs it is met and probably taken. When the king enjoys this amusement he generally holds in his hand some favourite dog, and the object of the field is then to drive the game in such a direction as to allow his majesty's hound to seize it. A yet more interesting method of taking the antelope is by using hawks. Two of a particular breed, trained for the purpose, are flown at the creature when yet at a distance, and on reaching it strike at its head and eyes, one of them often perching between its horns; and they annoy and distract its attention so much as to retard its

speed till the dogs come up. The best of these are of Arab breed, and their owners are as curious regarding their pedigree as that of their finest horses.

The mountain sheep and goats are also hunted, although it requires a stout sportsman to follow these animals with success, for they always choose the most rocky places for their retreat. Occasionally they are made the object of a royal chase, and M. Morier, in his Second Journey, mentions an intended expedition of this kind, which, however, proved a failure. Hawking is also a favourite amusement. Several sorts of falcons are trained for this purpose; and bustards, hares, herons, and partridges, afford excellent diversion in the more open parts of the country.

We need scarcely describe the military exercises, which form a portion of the customary sports. They consist principally in the jereedbazee, or throwing the jereed,—the keykej, or performing a variety of evolutions in the saddle, to enable the rider, in Parthian fashion, to shoot, while in full flight, at his advancing enemy,—and the various methods of practising with the sabre. Their horsemanship is celebrated; and although they cannot compare in nicety of training with the cavalry of India, yet they may claim the honour of being the boldest riders in the world. They urge their horses without the slightest apprehension over ground that would make the best English foxhunter draw up,—scramble over rocky mountains sprinkled with bushes,—dash down slopes of loose and slippery stones, and gallop up the steepest acclivities, where a false step would be death. In these daring feats their spirited animals do full justice to their confidence; but an experienced horseman of Europe would be shocked at the management of their mouths and the abuse of their feet as much as they would admire their undaunted boldness; for they drive them at full speed over ground hard enough to break down the stoutest limbs, and suddenly check them with violence enough to break their jaws and shake their frames to pieces.

We have observed, that pomp and ceremony are the delight of all Persians. They form, in fact, a part of the system of government which is considered indispensable to the due maintenance of authority. They term the gorgeous magnificence that surrounds their kings and rulers "the clothing of the state." "You may speak to the ears of

others," was the reply of an intelligent native to an English gentleman's remarks on this subject; "but if you would be understood by my countrymen, you must address their eyes." And in truth, the importance both of individuals and of kingdoms, is measured among them by the degree of show which is displayed, and of the attention which is exacted, by their envoys. If an ambassador assume great dignity, the nation he represents is believed to be wealthy and powerful. If he enforce deference and resent the slightest neglect, his sovereign is considered as a mighty potentate, and worthy of friendship and respect. Hence the diplomatic abilities of a royal representative are measured by the obstinacy with which he resists any meditated encroachment, or contests a point of form at his reception, rather than by the firmness with which he conducts a difficult negotiation, or the wisdom he exercises in establishing a treaty.

The ceremonies of the court of Persia are, in fact, a subject of the most minute study and attention. When the king is seated in public, his sons, ministers, and courtiers stand erect in their appointed places,—their hands crossed upon their girdles,—watching the looks of the sovereign, whose glance is a mandate. If he addresses an order or a question, a voice is heard in reply, and the lips of the speaker move, but not a gesture besides betrays animation in his frame. Should the monarch command him to approach, the awe he affects or feels permits him not to advance until the order has been several times repeated;* and these behests are always enunciated in a deep sonorous voice, and in the third person; the shah saying of himself, "The king commands,"—"The king is pleased," while his attendants usually address him as "Kibleh Allum" (the Object of the World's Regard!) and preface their reply by the words "May I be your sacrifice!"

When a foreign ambassador arrives, the court assumes its most solemn aspect, and its resources are taxed to dazzle the stranger as well by magnificence as the exhibition of uncontrolled power. As he approaches the royal residence a

* "I entreat your majesty not to order me to advance nearer the presence. I am overpowered" ("mi-souzum," I burn), was the reply of a very young courier,—in fact a boy,—when first introduced to the presence and desired to advance towards the king. His majesty was delighted.

deep silence prevails,—the men stand like statues,—the horses themselves, as if trained to such scenes, scarcely move their heads. The envoy is received in a small apartment by one of the principal officers of government, who, after a delay more or less protracted according to the honour intended to be paid, leads him to the hall of audience, where the sovereign, clothed in glittering apparel, sits on a throne covered with jewels. A garden, divided into parterres by walks, and adorned with flowers and fountains, spreads its beauties before the ample windows. Twice is the stranger called upon to bow before the king of kings ere he approach the presence, to which he is marshalled by two officers of state with gold-enamelled wands. His name and country are announced, and he is commanded to ascend. Arrived near the throne, the deep and solemn voice of the sovereign utters the gracious “Koosh Amedeed!” after which, retiring to his appointed place, he receives permission to be seated.

But the festival of the No Roz is the occasion on which the Shah of Persia is seen in his greatest glory. This period, the feast of the vernal equinox, the new year of the ancient Persians, retains its importance in the reformed calendar in spite of religious changes. On the birthday of the young Spring, when all nature rejoices,—and in no country is the transition from the gloom of winter more rapid and delightful than in Persia,—the king, by ancient custom, proceeds from his capital, attended by the ministers and nobles of his court, and a large body of troops, to an appointed place, where a magnificent tent is prepared, having in it the throne of state. The ceremonies commence with a grand review; tribute as well as presents from the governors of provinces, from the officers of state, and from all who are entitled to stand in the presence, are laid at the feet of his majesty. A week is thus spent in feasting and joy.

The servile respect paid to royalty is extended to every thing connected with it. Not only are the firmans and khelets of the king received by those to whom they are despatched with the most profound reverence, the most exact ceremony, and a display of the most submissive gratitude, but even when his picture was sent to a neighbouring power it was borne in a litter carried by mules, with a pompous attendance; and the salutes that were prescribed and the homage exacted wherever it passed, could scarcely have

been exceeded by those due to the monarch himself. All governors and nobles were enjoined to advance a stage to meet it,—they dismounted upon its approach,—the arrival was announced by discharges of artillery,—and the people were everywhere commanded to evince all possible demonstrations of joy on the happy occasion.

The ceremonies practised among a people on birth, death, and marriage, are usually considered as characteristic of national manners. The ritual employed at the naming of a child and at burial, differ little in Persia from those of other Mohammedan nations; nor would a description of petty observances either amuse or instruct. There are some peculiar customs, however, still kept up by the wandering tribes at the interment of a chief, which are interesting, as marking the origin of usages still observed by civilized nations. The charger of the departed warrior, carrying his arms and clothes,—his cap placed upon the demipique of his saddle,—the cloth with which he girt his loins bound round the animal's neck, and the boots laid across his back, accompanies the procession; and it is not unusual for those who desire to show their respect for the dead, to send a horse without a rider, to swell the train of the mourning cavalcade.

The ceremonies connected with marriage are more numerous and particular. Like all Moslems, the Persians are restricted to four legitimate wives, but the number of concubines is only limited by their means or their desires. All females not within the prohibited degrees of kindred may be legally taken into the harem in one of three ways,—in marriage, by purchase, or by hire. In the contemplation of a future union, the parties are often betrothed in infancy, though they never see each other until they stand before the priest; but then the female has the right of refusing to implement the engagement, and in that case the wedding cannot proceed. This privilege, however, like all female immunities in Mohammedan countries, is little better than a name. The nuptial ceremony must be witnessed by two men, or one man and two women; and the contract, regularly attested by a legal officer, is given to the lady, who preserves it carefully; for it is the deed by which she becomes entitled to her dower,—her sole dependence in case of divorce.

Marriages in Persia are occasions of great and almost

ruinous display. The period of feasting occupies from three to forty days, according to the condition of the parties. Three are necessary for observing the established forms. On the first the company are assembled ; on the second the bride's hands are stained with henna ; on the third the rite takes place. Perhaps an account of a marriage in middle life, as it actually occurred, may explain the nature of the ceremonies better than any dry detail. As the men (the bridegroom in this instance was a widower of advanced age) have seldom an opportunity of choosing a wife by sight, they are forced to employ some female friend to select a suitable partner ; and to her they must trust for all that appertains to mental or personal charms. The choice being made, and the gentleman satisfied, he sends a formal proposal, together with a present of sweetmeats, to the lady ; both of which, it is previously understood, will be accepted. This point being gained, he next forwards an assortment of fine clothes, shawls, and handkerchiefs, bedclothes and bedding, looking-glasses, glass and china-ware, bathing and cooking apparatus, henna for her hands, sugar and comfits ; in short, a complete domestic outfit : all of which, it is understood, the bride's family will double and return to the future husband. A day is then fixed for fetching home the bride : when a crowd of people collect at both houses,—the gentlemen at the bridegroom's, the ladies at that of the bride. The latter next proceed to complete the duties of their office, by conducting the young lady to the bath, where, after a thorough ablution, she is decked in her finest attire. As soon as it is dark the bridegroom's party proceed to bring her to her new habitation ; and much discussion sometimes arises at this stage of the business, as to the number of lanterns, of fiddlers, and guests that are to marshal the procession.

On reaching the bride's house, it is usual, before she mounts, to wrap her in a shawl provided by the husband. This, again, is often a point of dispute ; on the present occasion, the lady's friends objected to the indifferent quality of the shawl ; those of the gentleman's party, on the other hand, swore that it was excellent. Neither would give in, —the guests were all waiting, and the affair assumed a serious aspect ; when one of the visitors stepped forward, and volunteered his own. It was accepted, and the cavalcade proceeded,—the bride being accompanied by a great number of

persons, and attended by a boy bearing a looking-glass. At intervals on the road bridges are made in the following manner for her to step over: gentlemen of the husband's party are called upon by name, and must place themselves on their hands and knees on the ground before her horse; and the choice generally falling on corpulent or awkward individuals, much mirth is excited. In this way the party proceeds, with fiddling, drums beating, tambourines playing, and lanterns flourishing, till they meet the bridegroom, who comes to a certain distance in advance,—and this distance is the subject of another very serious discussion. As soon as he sees his lady, he throws an orange or some other fruit at her with all his force, and off he goes towards his house. This is the signal for a general scamper after him, and whosoever can catch him is entitled to his horse and clothes, or a ransom in lieu of them. When the bride arrives at the door, a man of either party jumps up behind her, and, seizing her by the waist, carries her within. Should this be done by one of the bridegroom's attendants, it is an omen of his maintaining in future a due authority over his wife; but, on the contrary, should one of her friends succeed in performing the duty—and it is always the subject of a sharp contest—it augurs that she will in future "keep her own side of the house." Another effort at insuring the continuance of his own supremacy is often made by the gentleman, who, on reaching his own domicile after throwing the orange, takes a station over the portal, that the lady on entering may pass under his feet, and thereby become subject to him; but if discovered in this ungallant attempt, he is instantly pelted from his post.

When, at length, she has passed into the room allotted for her reception, the husband makes his appearance, and a looking-glass is immediately held up in such a position as to reflect the face of his bride, whom he now for the first time sees unveiled. It is a critical and anxious moment, for it is that in which the fidelity of his agents is to be proved, and the charms of his beloved to be compared with those pictured by him in his ardent imagination; while the young ladies in attendance, as well as the gossiping old ones, are eager to catch the first glimpse, and communicate to all the world their opinion of her claims to beauty. After this, the bridegroom takes a bit of sugar-candy, and, biting it in two halves, eats one himself, and presents the other to his bride: on the

present occasion he had no teeth to bite with, and so he broke the sugar with his fingers ; which offended the young woman so much that she cast her portion away. He then takes her stockings, throws one over his left shoulder, places the other under his right foot, and orders all the spectators to withdraw. They retire accordingly, and the happy couple are left alone.

Such are the humours of a Persian wedding in middle life, and they are varied, no doubt, by the circumstances or disposition of the parties ; but the expense is always great, and, as we have said, sometimes ruinous.

The purchase of slaves calls for little remark, but their treatment does credit to the humanity of the people. They are for the most part Georgians or Africans, usually bought while very young, and educated as Mohammedans ; though beautiful females from the various Caucasian nations, particularly Circassians, are very generally selected to fill the harems of the great. Of those destined for more menial offices, the males become confidential servants, and in time are married to maidens who have been attendants on the wives of their masters ; and hence their children are held in estimation only inferior to that of relations. In almost every family of consequence the person in greatest trust is found to be "a house-born"** slave.

The third mode of legitimate connexion with females, to which allusion has been made, is peculiar to Persia. It was prohibited in Arabia by the Caliph Omar as infamous. A contract may be entered into for a limited period, by which a woman binds herself to live as a wife with a certain man, on consideration of receiving a specified sum ; and whether he chooses to leave her before the prescribed interval has expired or not, her claim to the money is unquestionable. But in no case can she demand any thing further ; and she acquires by her engagement no right whatever to share in his property in case of death.

We shall terminate this subject by a few words regarding the practice of divorce. It is well known that, by the Mohammedan law, a man may dismiss his wife at pleasure,—a privilege naturally arising out of a code so partial to the stronger sex. The only counterpoise to this arbitrary power

* *Persice, khanenzadeh.*

is the scandal which appears to attach to the measure, and the necessity of restoring the dower. The feelings of men of rank in all matters connected with female honour, restrains them from voluntarily exposing those who have been their wives to public disgrace ; and the obligation of returning the marriage-portion enlists self-interest against the practice among those of inferior fortune. Yet instances have occurred among the lower classes, of persons maltreating their spouses in order to force them into a suit for divorce ; in which case, the demand coming from them, they forfeit all claim to restitution of property. The most usual causes of separation are bad temper, extravagance, or some complaint of that nature. Adultery is never made a plea for that measure ; for that would at once subject the delinquent to capital punishment, without reference to the legal authorities.

CHAPTER XI.

Account of Afghanistan.

Boundaries of Afghanistan—Divisions—Hindoo-Coosh—Solyman Range—Cabul—Candahar—Daman—Aspect of the Country—Origin of the Afghans—Construction and internal Government of the Tribes—Usages of the Afghans—Hospitality—Character and Disposition—Dress—Division of the Tribes, and Account of the principal Ones—Cities—Candahar—Ghizni—Cabul—Peshawer—Rise of the Dooranee Monarchy—Ahmed Shah—Timur Shah—Shahr Zeman—Mahmoud Sujah ul Mulk—Fate of Futeh Khan.

IN defining the limits of Afghanistan, we restrict ourselves to the country properly so named, which upon the north is bounded by the crests of the Himmaleh or Hindoo-Coosh Mountains ; on the east by the rivers Indus and Jelum ; on the south (to the east of the Indus) by the eastern branch of the Salt Range Mountains, and (to the west of the Indus) by Seweestan or Cutch Gundava, and Sareewan of Beloochistan ; on the west by the Salt Desert and the Heermund ; and on the north-west by the Paropamisan Mountains and the country of the Hazaras.

The tract thus marked out comprehends a great variety of

soil and scenery, but may be generally described as an elevated plateau, exhibiting an aggregation of mountains intersected by valleys varying in fertility no less than in size, and sometimes stretching out into extensive plains. It divides itself naturally into separate districts ; and a short account of these may furnish a sufficient idea of its general appearance and character. The most northern of these divisions is comprehended in the valley of the Cabul river, and extends from a point somewhat to the west of the Pass of Bamian to the Indus. The former of these streams, one branch of which takes its rise a little to the west of Ghizni, assumes a northern course to the town of Cabul, where it is joined by the petty rivulet that gives its name to the collected waters of the valley. From thence turning abruptly eastward, it receives every brook that flows from the numerous ravines on the southern face of Hindoo-Coosh, as well as the few which run from the northern side of the range of Solyman. Thus augmented it sweeps along with a rapid current, and pours itself into the Indus, a little above Attok, in a mass scarcely inferior to that in which it then becomes lost.

The northern side of the Cabul valley is again classed into several sections. Of these the eastern and most remote is that of Cohistan or the Mountainous Country, which, commencing in the Paropamisan or Hazara regions, embraces the low lands of Nijrow, Punjsheer, Ghorebund, Tugow, and Oozbeen ; the waters of which united join the Cabul River at Bareekab. These valleys are described as blessed with a delightful climate ; embellished with the most enchanting scenery ; producing the finest European fruits in abundance ; watered with a thousand delicious streams, and finely cultivated.

The district of Lughman comprehends the valleys of Alingar and Alishung, with the numerous subordinate glens, all of which are equally rich and beautiful ; together with the fine and fertile plains of Jellalabad, where the productions of the torrid zone are found mingled with those of temperate climates. The impetuous river of Kashkar, which has its rise in the Pooshti Khur, a peak of the Beloot Taugh, or Cloudy Mountains, after piercing the Himmaleh, rushes through the dell of Coonnah to join the Cabul. It is a hot and low spot, above which the lofty peak of Coond, forming the termination of an angle at the junction of the Beloot

Taugh and the Hindoo-Coosh, towers like a mighty buttress capped with eternal snow. The small valley of Punjcora and the plain of Bajoor, with their tributary glens, open into the more extensive and very fertile district of Swaut, where forest and pasture lands are mingled with high cultivation in the most harmonious variety; and every sort of fruit and grain is found in perfection and abundance. The loftier mountains are, however, inhabited by the Caufirs or Infidels, a singular race of savages, who, though they believe in one God, worship idols, and supplicate the deified souls of great men; are remarkable for the beauty of their persons; but who, from wearing black clothes, have been called *Sia pooshes*, or Sable-clad. The description now given of Swaut will apply with little variation to Boonere, Chumla, and all those valleys which pour their waters either into the Cabul or the Indus.

The great chain of Hindoo-Coosh is described by Mr. Elphinstone as rising above the level of Peshawer in four distinct ranges. The lowest, which on the 24th February was clear of snow, is clothed with forests of oak, pine, wild-olive, and a variety of other trees, including every species of natural fruits and many of the most graceful herbs and flowers, in the richest profusion. Their sides are furrowed with multitudes of glens or valleys, each watered by its own little stream; the lower parts of which are carefully cultivated. The second series is still more densely wooded, except towards the top, where snow at that time sprinkled the elevated peaks. The third was shrouded halfway down in the same wintry mantle; while the fourth, constituting the true range of the stupendous Himmaleh, soared aloft in bold masses or spiry peaks, deeply covered with semipernal snows. At the time when seen by the mission, the snowy summits were at least 100 miles distant; yet such was the clearness of the atmosphere, that the ridges and hollows were distinctly discernible; and instances have been known of their having been distinguished at the distance of 250 miles. It is through the valleys we have described that those passes lead, by which travellers* are enabled to cross this magnifi-

* While we write, the intrepid perseverance of two British officers and the zeal of a missionary have achieved this enterprise, hitherto unattempted by Europeans. The converted Jew, Joseph Wolff, after trav-

cent barrier. The principal of these bear the names of Bamian and Ghorebund, conducting into the territories of Balkh, and by which the Emperor Baber made his way to Cabul. They are all extremely difficult, and only passable during the months of summer and early autumn.

The plain of Peshawer itself forms a division of the Cabul valley. It is a circular tract of about thirty-five miles in diameter, with a soil of rich black mould, and so well watered, that but for the extreme heats of summer it would be covered with perpetual verdure. It is divided from the more elevated grounds of Jellalabad by a small range of hills which stretch across from the Hindoo-Coosh to the Suffeid-Koh. In this fertile spot the inhabitants enjoy a better climate than at Peshawer; yet, although the snow-covered masses of Coond and of the Suffeid-Koh rear themselves on either hand, the heat in summer is intensely great. The third division comprises the valley of Cabul, properly so named, which enjoys the temperature and all the productions of the most favoured regions.

In order to comprehend the features of the country to the south of the Cabul plain, it is necessary to describe the Solyman range, that occupies so great a portion of its surface, and which probably derives its appellation from the huge mountain called the Tucht e Solyman. This towering mass, which may be said to originate in the lofty peak of Speen-ghur or Suffeid-Koh, to the south of Jellalabad, and which, spreading to the east and west, forms the southern boundary of the Cabul valley, throws several continuous ridges far to the southward. Of these, one assuming a south-westerly direction runs quite to the borders of Beloochistan; another pursues a more southern course, and with several interruptions and variations of height reaches the confines of Seewestan. The country between these principal barriers is occupied by groups of mountains connected with each other; in some places opening out into plains of various extent, and in others pierced by the courses of the rivers which drain the whole tract. Some of these are covered with deep forests

crossing Persia, Bokhara, and Balkh, crossed into Cabul by the Bamian Pass. At that city he met Lieutenants Burnes and Gerrard, who, after surveying the Indus, had traversed Afghanistan from Hindostan with the intention of passing into Persia. This they performed, crossing at the same place, and, after various adventures, arriving at Teheran.

of pine and wild-olive trees ; others are bare and steril, or merely afford a scanty pasture to the flocks which are reared on them.

We may now return to Cabul, from whence a long valley opens up to the south-west, ascending towards Ghizni, and receiving tributary streams from the glens of the eastern face of the Solyman range. It reaches an elevated tract destitute of wood, but interspersed with spots of rich cultivation, among which appear the ruins of the ancient city. The river Turnuk, which rises some thirty miles south-west of those remains, pursues the same direction through a valley poorly watered and ill cultivated, till, uniting with the Urghundab and other streams, it joins the Heermund at a considerable distance to the west of Candahar.

This last-mentioned town stands in a fertile and highly-improved country ; but the desert circumscribes it on most sides within narrow limits. Several other valleys slope down from the Solyman range towards the desert on the east of the Heermund, as Gwashta, Urghessian, Saleh Yesoon, Toba, Pisheen, Burshore, and Shawl. They are in general better suited for pasture than agriculture, yet are interspersed with well-cultivated spots ; and the two last are particularly rich and flourishing. The hills are in some places clothed with trees, among which is a sort of gigantic cypress, and the plains are in others covered with tamarisks.

The other southern districts which border on Sewestan, as Furrah, Tull, and Chooteeallée, have some resemblance to that province, but enjoy a better climate, and are more sedulously cultivated ; while the plain of Boree, north of these, is compared in extent and fertility to that of Peshawer. The central division includes several beautiful valleys, with two considerable rivers, the Zhobe and the Gomul, which run to the eastward and unite their waters. The whole tract, though it appears not to be by any means destitute of fertility, is not well calculated for agriculture. Farther north, the Koorum, traversing the country from west to east, cuts through the range of Solyman, and enters the Indus near Kagulwalla.

Daman alone remains to be noticed. The term itself signifies the skirts of the hills ; but the tract in question is divided into three parts : First, Muckelwaund, a plain consisting of a hard tenacious clay, bare or scantily sprinkled with

tamarisk and thorny shrubs, about 120 miles square, on the banks of the Indus. Its principal town is Derah Ismael Khan, which is but thinly peopled. Secondly, the country of the Murwats, a tract thirty-five miles square, to the northward of the former; and, thirdly, Daman Proper, which extends along the foot of the mountains of Solyman, and resembles Muckelwaud, but is more closely inhabited, and better cultivated.

The country which we have thus endeavoured to sketch is occupied by a multitude of tribes, who claim a common origin, and form a nation differing widely in character, appearance, and manners, from all the states by whom they are surrounded; while, at the same time, the diversity that exists among themselves is not less remarkable. "Amid the contrasts which are apparent in the government, manners, dress, and habits of the different tribes," observes Mr. Elphinstone, "I find it difficult to select those great features which all possess in common, and which give a marked national character to the whole of the Afghans. This difficulty is increased by the fact, that those qualities which distinguish them from all their neighbours are by no means the same which, without reference to such a comparison, would appear to Europeans to predominate in their character. The freedom which forms their grand distinction among the nations of the East might seem to an Englishman a mixture of anarchy and arbitrary power; and the manly virtues that raise them above their neighbours might sink in his estimation almost to the level of the opposite defects. It may therefore assist in appreciating their situation and character, to figure the aspects they would present to a traveller from England, and to one from India."

"If a man could be transported from England to the Afghan country without passing through the dominions of Turkey, Persia, or Tartary, he would be amazed at the wide and unsrequent deserts, and the mountains covered with perennial snow. Even in the cultivated part of the country he would discover a wild assemblage of hills and wastes, unmarked by enclosures, not embellished by trees, and destitute of navigable canals, public roads, and all the great and elaborate productions of human industry and refinement. He would find the towns few, and far distant from each other; and he would look in vain for inns or other conveniences which a traveller would meet with in the wildest parts of

Great Britain. Yet he would sometimes be delighted with the fertility and populousness of particular plains and valleys, where he would see the productions of Europe mingled in profusion with those of the torrid zone, and the land laboured with an industry and a judgment nowhere surpassed. He would see the inhabitants following their flocks in tents, or assembled in villages, to which the terraced roofs and mud walls give an appearance entirely new. He would be struck at first with their high and even harsh features, their sun-burnt countenances, their long beards, their loose garments, and their shaggy mantles of skins. When he entered into the society, he would notice the absence of regular courts of justice, and of every thing like an organized police. He would be surprised at the fluctuation and instability of the civil institutions. He would find it difficult to comprehend how a nation could subsist in such disorder ; and would pity those who were compelled to pass their days in such a scene, and whose minds were trained by their unhappy situation to fraud and violence, to rapine, deceit, and revenge. Yet he would scarce fail to admire their martial and lofty spirit, their hospitality, and their bold and simple manners, equally removed from the suppleness of a citizen and the awkward rusticity of a clown ; and he would, probably, before long discover, among so many qualities that excited his disgust, the rudiments of many virtues.

"But an English traveller from India would view them with a more favourable eye. He would be pleased with the cold climate, elevated by the wild and novel scenery, and delighted by meeting many of the productions of his native land. He would first be struck with the thinness of the fixed population, and then with the appearance of the people ; not fluttering in white muslins, while half their bodies are naked, but soberly and decently attired in dark-coloured woollen clothes, and wrapped up in brown mantles, or in large sheep-skin cloaks. He would admire their strong and active forms ; their fair complexions and European features ; their industry and enterprise ; the hospitality, sobriety, and contempt of pleasure which appear in all their habits ; and, above all, the independence and energy of their character. In India, he would have left a country where every movement originates in the government or its agents, and where the people absolutely go for nothing ; and he would find himself among

a nation where the control of the government is scarcely felt, and where every man appears to pursue his own inclination undirected and unrestrained. Amid the stormy independence of this mode of life, he would regret the ease and security in which the state of India, and even the indolence and timidity of its inhabitants, enable most parts of that country to repose. He would meet with many productions of art and nature that do not exist in India ; but, in general, he would find the arts of life less advanced, and many of the luxuries of Hindostan unknown. On the whole, his impression of his new acquaintances would be favourable ; although he would feel, that without having lost the ruggedness of a barbarous nation, they were tainted with the vices common to all Asiatics. Yet he would reckon them virtuous, compared with the people to whom he had been accustomed ; would be inclined to regard them with interest and kindness ; and could scarcely deny them a portion of his esteem."

Such is the masterly sketch given of the Afghan country and people, whom we shall now examine somewhat more in detail. Their origin is obscure, and probably remote. According to their own traditions, they believe themselves descended from the Jews ; and in a history of the Afghans,* written in the sixteenth century, and lately translated from the Persian, they are derived from Afghan, the son of Eremia, the son of Saul, king of Israel, whose posterity being carried away at the time of the Captivity, was settled by the conqueror in the Mountains of Ghori, Cabul, Candahar, and Ghizni. The historian goes on to say, that they preserved the purity of their religion ; and that when Mohammed, the last and greatest of the prophets, appeared, one of the nation, named Kais, at the invitation of the celebrated Khaled ibn Walid, repaired to Mecca, and, together with his countrymen, embraced Islam. Having joined the standard of the Faithful, and fought in their cause, he returned to his own country, where his progeny continued to observe the new religion, to propagate its doctrines, and to slay the infidels. No proof is adduced of the truth of this traditional genealogy, which assuredly has much the aspect of fable ; and the opinion of the intelligent author already quoted on the subject may be gathered from his own words. "I fear we must

* By Neamut Ullah, translated by the Translation Society.

class the descent of the Afghans from the Jews, with that of the Romans and the Britons from the Trojans, and that of the Irish from the Milesians or the Bramins."

It is to be observed, that the term Afghan, as applied to the nation, is unknown to the inhabitants of the country, except through the medium of the Persian language. Their own name for themselves is Pooshtoon—in the plural Pooshtauneh—from which, probably by the usual process of verbal corruption, comes the term *Peisan* or *Patian*, by which they are known in India.

But, setting fable and conjecture aside, there is no doubt that the country in question has been inhabited by their tribes from a very distant period. Those of Soor and Lodi, from both of whom kings have issued, are mentioned as owing their extraction to the union of Khaled ibn Abdoolah, an Arab leader, with the daughter of an Afghan chief, in A. D. 682. They are mentioned by Ferishta repeatedly, as having withstood the progress of the Saracens in the early ages of Mohammedan conquest. In the ninth century, they were subject to the house of Saman; and though Sultan Mahmoud of Ghizni himself sprang from another race, his power, and the mighty empire of which his capital was the seat and centre, was undoubtedly maintained in a great measure by the hardy troops of the Afghan mountains. In fact, though these tribes have given birth to the founders of many powerful dynasties, the individual sovereigns have seldom been contented to fix their residence in their native land. Thus the Ghorees, Ghiljees, and the Lodees, as they rose into power, turned their arms to the eastward, and erected their thrones in the capital of Hindostan. Afghanistan, accordingly, has seldom been more than a province or appendage to some neighbouring empire; and although the impracticable nature of the country, and the brave and independent spirit of the people, have often baffled the efforts of the most powerful princes, there is not a conqueror of Central Asia by whom it has not been overrun and reduced to at least a nominal and temporary obedience.

But a history of its various revolutions is not our present object. We therefore resume the account of those tribes which form the nation; and, following the arrangement of Mr. Elphinstone, we shall first lay before our readers such characteristics as are common to the whole; after which we

shall make the individual exceptions that require notice. The tribes of Afghanistan, though at the present time infinitely subdivided, continue in a great measure unmixed, each having its separate territory, and all retaining the patriarchal form of government. The term of *Ooloos* is applied either to a whole tribe or to an independent branch of it. Each has its own immediate ancestor, and constitutes a complete commonwealth in itself. Each subdivision has its chief,—a Speen Zherah* (literally, white-beard) or Mullik (master), if it consist of but a few families,—a khan if it be an ooloos, who is always chosen from the oldest family. The selection of this office rests in most cases with the king,—in others with the people themselves. It is a peculiarity, however, arising probably from the internal arrangement of an Afghan tribe, that the attachment of those who compose it, unlike that of most countries, is always rather to the community than to the chief; and a native holds the interests of the former so completely paramount, that the private wish of the latter would be utterly disregarded by him, if at variance with the honour or advantage of his *kheilt* or *ooloos*. The internal government is carried on by the khan, in conjunction with certain assemblies of heads of divisions: such a meeting is called a *jeerga*, and before it all affairs of consequence are brought for consideration. But this system of rule is liable to many modifications. In all civil actions the statutes of Mohammed are generally adhered to; but criminal justice is administered according to the *Pooshtoonwullee* or usage of the Afghans,—a system of law sufficiently rude. In conformity with this, private revenge, though denounced by the mollahs, is sanctioned by public opinion; and the measure of retribution, “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” is strictly enforced. But the evil consequences of this retaliating system, which leads to new disputes, and tends to perpetuate every quarrel, have given rise to judicial *jeergas*, composed of khans, elders, and mollahs, who take cognizance of criminal actions, and inflict penalties suitable to each offence. These, when the crime has been committed against an individual, generally include an humble apology to him, together with such compensation as seems reasonable to the

* The same as *Reish Suffed* in Persian, or *Ak Sukhal* in Turkish.
† *Kheil* is synonymous with *clan*.

court ; and in this solatium the gift of a certain number of females is not unfrequently included.* The reconciliation is enforced by the acceptance of mutual hospitality, and is said generally to be firm and sincere. In cases of obstinacy, or delay in complying with the decision of the jeerga, the penalties are malediction and interdict by the mollahs, expulsion from the ooloos, and seizure of the culprit's property.

There are likewise other modes of adjusting private disputes. An offender, in grave cases, presents himself as a suppliant at the house of some considerable man of his tribe, who, assembling a few other persons of respectability, together with some seyeds and mollahs, goes to the house of the aggrieved party, taking with him the culprit dressed in a shroud. The offender then, placing a drawn sword in the hand of him he has injured, declares his life to be at his mercy ; upon which, according to the usage of Pooshtoon-wullee, pardon cannot be refused. A compensation is always offered for the loss sustained ; and if the individual upon whom it has been inflicted be averse to reconciliation, he takes care to be out of the way when the deputation arrives.

The prevalence of feuds, and the passion for predatory excursions, not only nurses a martial spirit among the people, but renders a military establishment indispensably necessary. The footing, however, on which the army is placed, varies according to circumstances. Thus, while in some tribes every man is bound to take up arms at the summons of the jeerga, in others the service of a foot-soldier for every plough, or of a horseman for every two, is all that can be required. These persons receive no pay ; but in some cases, when a horse is killed, its price is made good to the owner from the funds of the community.*

A family which for any reason is induced to quit its own ooloos may, by the customs and rules of Afghan hospitality, be admitted into another ; and, once received, it is treated with peculiar attention, and placed in all respects on a footing of equality with the original members of the community. Every ooloos has many persons called humsayaha attached to it who are not Afghans : they are regarded with con-

* This, as an Afghan always purchases his wife, is no trifling part of the penalty.

sideration, but not allowed to have any share in the administration of affairs.

Of societies such as we have endeavoured to describe under their various designations of khells, oolooses, and tribes, the Afghan nation is composed ; and circumstances have of late times placed it under the government of one common sovereign. His authority is, however, by no means paramount ; for the same spirit which leads them to prefer the interests of their respective clans to that of their chiefs is also repugnant to such devoted loyalty as would strengthen the power of a prince. Thus the sway of the late Dooranee monarchs, although sufficiently recognised among their own tribe and in the districts adjoining the principal towns of the kingdom, has at all times been imperfect among those more remote, and among the mountaineers was scarcely acknowledged at all. Enabled through his great family influence to maintain an efficient army independent of the people, he possesses the means of interfering to a certain extent with the internal management of the tribes within his reach ; but even with them any attempt at undue authority would be resented. By way of illustrating the nature and condition of the Afghan government, Mr. Elphinstone compares it to the power of the kings of Scotland over the principal towns and the country immediately around them. The precarious submission of the nearest clans and the independence of the remote ones,—the inordinate pride of the court nobility, and the general relations borne by all the great lords to the crown,—exemplify very exactly the corresponding imperfections in the Dooranee constitution. The system, notwithstanding its obvious defects, is considered by that author as not devoid of certain advantages, chiefly as affording a check to the corruption and oppression to which the officers of a despot are so prone ; and that, while conniving at little disorders, it affords a certain security against the great and calamitous revolutions which so frequently occurred, particularly upon the death of a monarch. It is not without much hesitation that we should venture to dissent from such authority ; though the facts seem scarcely sufficient to support the reasoning. Individual tribes may by their internal administration have partially escaped the effects arising from the subversion of the government, but nothing can be more

wretched than the present condition of the kingdom of Cabul.

The usages of the Afghans with regard to their females assimilate very nearly with those of most Mohammedan nations. Such as live in towns are secluded with the customary jealousy; while those who dwell in the country are of necessity permitted to enjoy a far greater degree of liberty. As they purchase their wives,—a common Asiatic practice,—the women, though generally well-treated, are regarded in some measure as property. A husband can divorce his spouse at pleasure; but the latter can only sue for relief before the cauzee, and that on good grounds. As with the Jews of old, it is thought incumbent on a man to marry the widow of a deceased brother; and it is a moral affront to him should any other person take her without his consent. The widow, however, is not obliged to enter into a new engagement; and if she have children it is thought more becoming for her to remain single.

The age of marriage among them is twenty for the one sex and sixteen for the other; but such as are unable to pay the price of a wife (which varies according to their condition and means) often remain unmarried till forty. In towns, the mode of courtship and the arrangements for marriage so nearly resemble those of the Persians that no particular description is necessary; but in the country, where the women go unveiled, and there is less restraint upon the intercourse between the young, matches are made as in European countries, according to the fancy and liking of the parties. It is even in the power of an enterprising lover to obtain his mistress without the consent of her parents, by cutting off a lock of her hair, snatching away her veil, or throwing over her a sheet, and proclaiming her his affianced wife. No other person will after this approach her with such views; and the payment of her price (from which this act does not exempt him) induces the father generally to yield his consent to the match. If not, the usual recourse is an elopement,—which, however, is as high an outrage as a murder, and is usually expiated by the supplicatory process already mentioned.

With regard to the intercourse of betrothed persons prior to marriage, the usages of tribes differ. Some enjoin the most positive separation until the knot is tied. Among

others, the bridegroom is required to live with his father-in-law, and earn his wife by service, as Jacob did Rachel, without ever seeing the object of his affection. With a third class, again, an excessive and somewhat perilous degree of familiarity is permitted. Polygamy is less practised among them than in other Mohammedan states, probably on account of their poverty. The poor content themselves with one wife ; and two, with an equal number of concubines, are reckoned a liberal establishment for persons in middle rank.

The condition of women in Afghanistan is nearly the same as in other parts of Asia. The rich in their concealment enjoy all the comforts and luxuries suited to their rank in life. The poor employ themselves in household labour, to which, among the ruder tribes, that of field-work is added. In towns they go about as in Persia, covered with a large sheet, commonly white, which envelops their whole person, and wear large cotton boots which hide the shape of the legs. In the country, the only restraint they lie under is that of general opinion, which induces them to cover their faces immediately if they see a man approaching with whom they are not on terms of intimacy. They are kind and humane, and at the same time remarkable for correctness of deportment.

The Afghans conduct the education of their children much as other Mohammedans do. The poor send them to a mullah to learn their prayers and read the Koran. The rich keep priests as private tutors in their houses. In every village and camp there is a schoolmaster, who enjoys his allotted portion of land, and receives a small contribution from his pupils. When those intended for the learned professions are sufficiently advanced, they go to some city, Peshawer in particular, to study logic, theology, or law. A nation so rude can have no high pretensions to literary attainments. Mr. Elphinstone has given some specimens of their poetical compositions, which are not calculated to inspire any lofty ideas of their value. The Pushtoo dialect appears to consist of an original stock, embracing a considerable proportion of Persian, with a few words of Zend and Sanscrit; but no trace of similarity could be discovered to the Hebrew, Chaldaic, Georgian, or Armenian tongues. In writing it they make use of the Persian alphabet and the Niskee character.

In religious matters the Afghans, who are all Sonnites, are

generally more liberal and tolerant than other Mohammedans. Hindoos, upon being subjected to a slight tax, are allowed to occupy the towns without molestation. Christians sustain neither persecution nor reproach for their faith ; sheahs are much more the objects of aversion ; yet the country is full of Persians, many of whom hold important offices in the state, and even in the royal household. Suffeeism is prevalent there ; and, though denounced by the mollahs, continues to gain ground, particularly among the higher orders. Even the dissolute doctrines of Mollah Zuckee^{*} are alleged to have their supporters among the nobles of the court ; and to this day there are said to be about Peshawer some adherents of the sect of Sheik Bayazeed Ansaarie,^f whose genius raised a storm that even menaced the throne of the great Akbar.

The Afghans, in truth, notwithstanding their liberality and toleration, are fully as superstitious as any people on earth. For example, they are devout believers in alchymy and magic, in which they conceive the Indian ascetics to excel ; they have perfect faith in the efficacy of charms, philtres, and talismans ; they place all possible credit in dreams, divination, the existence of ghosts and genii ; and there is no nation more implicitly led by their priests. These holy men, who are deeply imbued with the *esprit du corps*, and are often persons of powerful and active minds, being in possession of all the learning in the country, and having in their hands all that regards the education of youth, the practice of law, and administration of justice, exert their influence so effectually as to control the authority of royalty itself. A power so absolute could neither be acquired nor maintained without some portion of intrinsic virtue and wisdom, and it is not denied that the authority of the mollahs is frequently exerted to repress violence and to prevent bloodshed. These sacred peacemakers are frequently seen interposing their flowing garments between two hostile tribes, holding aloft the Koran,

* These sectarians hold that all the prophets were impostors, all revelation an invention, and seem very doubtful of the truth of a future state, and even of the being of a God. Their tenets appear to be very ancient.

† This pious person taught that the Divinity was pleased to manifest himself completely in the person of himself and other holy men ; and that all those who thought otherwise were in fact dead, and that their goods, in consequence, justly fell to the lot of his partisans, as the only survivors.

and calling on the wrathful combatants to remember their God, and respect the ministers of their common faith. But, on the other hand, they are arrogant, overbearing, and revengeful : an affront, or even a slight, is resented in the most implacable manner ; and anathemas are hurled against the offender by a whole army of furious divines, who urge the rest of the community to avenge their cause. True virtue and piety are incompatible with such a spirit ; and we find, in fact, that the mollahs of Afghanistan are hypocritical, bigoted, and avaricious. They are fond of preaching up an austere life, and of discouraging the most innocent pleasures. In some parts of the country they even break lutes and fiddles wherever they find them. They are sanctimonious in public, but some of them practise all sorts of licentiousness that can be enjoyed without scandal, and many are notorious for the practice of usury.

Besides this blind regard for their mollahs, the Afghans are remarkable for their admiration of dervises, calanders, and other ascetics who lay claim to a peculiar share of celestial favour. The tombs of such holy persons are visited as places of worship by the pious, and in all ordinary cases are considered as asylums,—even from revenge for blood. So high is this respect carried, that a sovereign prince, in the presence of certain very eminent saints, will not sit down until he is entreated.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of this people is their hospitality. The practice of this virtue is founded so much on a national feeling, that their reproach to a niggardly man is, that "he has no Pooshtoonwullee,"—that is, nothing of the custom of the Afghans. There are some usages connected with this principle which deserve mention ; of which the most remarkable is that of Nannawaatee (two Pooshtoo words, meaning, "I have come in"). A person having a favour to entreat, goes to the tent or house of the individual on whom it depends, but refuses to sit on his carpet or partake of his food until he shall grant the boon required. Custom makes it a point of honour to concede the request, if in the power of the party thus besought. A still stronger appeal is that made by a woman when she sends her veil, and implores assistance for herself or her family.

The laws of hospitality in Afghanistan protect every individual without exception. Even a man's bitterest enemy is

safe when beneath his roof. This sacred regard to the personal security of a guest is universally observed, or at least professed; by all savage and patriarchal nations ; and even among people more advanced towards refinement, the traces of such generous customs are still to be discovered. They appear to have arisen from the dread of those horrors which the want of a regular government would infallibly produce. Yet it is not less curious than painful to remark, how soon these laudable institutions—these suggestions of the better feelings of our nature—cease to operate upon the dispositions of the very men who affect to be so scrupulously governed by them. The protection conferred by the rights of hospitality does not extend beyond the lands of the village, or, at most, of the tribe ; and a European would be astonished to find that, after the most kindly intercourse, the stranger who has received it is as much exposed as any other traveller to be robbed and plundered.

"There is no point in the Afghan character," remarks Mr. Elphinstone, "of which it is more difficult to get a clear idea, than the mixture of sympathy and indifference, of generosity and rapacity, which is observable in their conduct to strangers. In parts of the country where the government is weak, they seem to think it a matter of course to rob a stranger, while in all other respects they treat him with kindness and civility. So much more do they attend to granting favours than to respecting rights, that the same Afghan who would plunder a traveller of his cloak if he had one, would give him a cloak if he had none."* He attributes this singular turn of mind to a defect in the Pooshtoonwullee system, which relies upon the exertions of the injured party, or of his family for obtaining justice ; while the impunity which attends the plunder of those who have not the means of enforcing justice encourages the practice of rapine. But to this it may be objected, that the very same habits are found to prevail where there is no Pooshtoonwullee to account for them ; and the same causes which make the Arabs, the Turkmans, the Belooches, the Kurds, and other wandering tribes

* May not this originate in the pride of power, in the wantonness of a spirit of independence, as probably as in the mingled love of gain and liberality? The act of plundering, as well as that of bestowing, imply superiority of power, and thus gratify personal vanity.

of Persia notorious as robbers, may suffice to account for a similar disposition among the Afghans.

It is remarked that the pastoral tribes in the west are more addicted to robbery and theft than the agricultural ones. With all of them, however, except the Khyberees, a previous agreement with the chiefs will secure a safe passage through their territories, and even the presence of a single man is in most cases a sufficient protection. It is also said that the Afghans do not aggravate those crimes by murder; and that though a person may lose his life in defending his property, he is not likely to be put to death after ceasing to resist.

The common reproach of ignorance, barbarism, and stupidity brought against this interesting people by the Persians, is perhaps not well founded. They have not indeed the refinement possessed by some of their neighbours, and want of intercourse with nations more advanced in the arts of life may have prevented the expansion of their understandings; but the bulk of the people are remarkable for prudence, good sense, and observation, to which may be added a sufficient share of curiosity. Though far less veracious than Europeans in general, and not very scrupulous about deceiving others when their interest is concerned, they are by no means so utterly indifferent to truth as the natives of Persia and India. Love of gain and the love of independence appear to be their ruling passions; but the first influences their conduct as individuals, the second sways them more in their social and public relations. Most of the Dooranee lords, for instance, prefer hoarding useless treasures to the esteem and power and reputation which liberality would command; yet even with them personal equality and national independence is ever in their mouths. "Happy is the country, and praiseworthy is the government," say they, "where every man eats the produce of his own field, and no one concerns himself with his neighbour's business." But well as each loves his own freedom, the feeling appears to be exceeded by that of devotedness to family and clan; and though this spirit tends to diminish their loyalty, and in some degree their patriotism, they all take a lively interest in the "Nung du Pooshtavneh," or honour of the Afghan name, and prefer their own land to any upon earth. A native of the wild valley of Speiga, who had been forced to fly his country for some

edence, was relating his adventures, and enumerating the countries he had travelled through, comparing them with his own. "I have seen," said he, "all Persia and India, Georgia, Tartary, and Beloochistan, but in all my travels I have seen no such place as Spiega."

They are proud of their descent, and will hardly acknowledge one who cannot prove his genealogy six or seyen generations back. They are kind to all who are in their power, whatever may be their country or religion; but vanquished nations are less considerately treated than individuals. Their fierce independence and affectation of general equality dispose them to jealousy and envy; though where these passions do not come into operation, they are said to be faithful friends; and perhaps it may be owing to a principle of gratitude and honour combined, that they are found to be more zealous in performing a service after having received a present than when it is only expected.

"I know no people in Asia," says Mr Elphinstone when speaking of their character, "who have fewer vices, or are less voluptuous or debauched;" but this is more remarkable in the west, where evil example is less prevalent. They are industrious and laborious when pursuing any object either of business or of pleasure; but when not so excited they are indolent. "To sum up their character in a few words," concludes the same judicious author, "their vices are, revenge, envy, avarice, rapacity, and obstinacy; on the other hand, they are fond of liberty, faithful to their friends, kind to their dependants, hospitable, brave, hardy, frugal, laborious, and prudent; and they are less disposed than the nations in their neighbourhood to falsehood, intrigue, and deceit."

The men of Afghanistan are for the most part of a robust make, generally lean, though muscular and bony. They have elevated noses, high cheekbones, and long faces. Their hair is commonly black, though it is sometimes brown, and more rarely red. They wear long thick beards, but shave the middle of the head. The western tribes are stouter than those to the east; the latter have the national features more strongly marked, and have usually dark complexions, although many are as fair as Europeans. In dress and manners the former approximate somewhat to the Persians, while those of the east have borrowed in the same

degree from India; and it is to be remarked, that the fashions thus once adopted are never changed. In their manners the Afghans are frank and open, equally free from stateliness and puerility. Their amusements are much the same as in Persia. When not in action, they are fond of sitting in conversation, and now and then passing round a calleeoon; but their favourite mode of using tobacco is in snuff, and of this,—a high-dried fine powder like the Scotch,—they use immoderate quantities. They are a very social people, and delight in dinner-parties; at which, among the common and middle classes, the fare is generally boiled mutton, with the broth seasoned with salt and pepper, and in this they soak their bread. After this meal they usually smoke, or, forming a closer circle, tell stories and sing songs, the subject of which is generally love, and accompany them upon instruments resembling guitars, fiddles, and hautboys. Their tales, like those of the Arabian Nights, are for the most part about kings and their viziers, genii and fairies, and always end with a moral. All sit silent while the narrative proceeds, and when ended there is a general cry of "Ai shawash!" (Ah, well done!)

Among their more active amusements may be reckoned that of the chase. Large parties, both on foot and horseback, assemble and drive all the game of a district into some small valley, where they attack it with dogs and guns, and often make a great slaughter. More frequently they go out with greyhounds to course hares, foxes, and deer. In winter they track wolves and other wild animals in the snow, and kill them in their dens. They never shoot birds flying, but fire at them with small shot as they sit or run. There is little hawking practised, but they ride down partridges on the open ground,—an easy feat, as the bird after two or three flights becomes frightened and fatigued, and suffers itself to be struck with a stick. They are fond of horseracing, and make matches at firearms, or bows and arrows. They likewise fight cocks, quails, dogs, rams, and even camels, for a dinner or some other small stake.

The Western Afghans are fond of a particular dance called the attum or ghoomboor, in which from ten to twenty people move in strange attitudes, with shouting, clapping of hands, and snapping of fingers, in a circle, round a single person who plays on an instrument in the centre,

The dress of these tribes, which, indeed, seems to be the true national costume, consists of a loose pair of trousers of dark cotton stuff, a large shirt like a wagoner's frock reaching below the knees, a low cap resembling that of a hulan, the sides being of black silk or satin, and the top of some sort of brocade. The feet are covered with a pair of half-boots that lace up to the calf, and over all is thrown a cloak of well tanned sheep-skin with the wool inside, or of soft gray felt.

The women wear a shirt like that of the men, but much longer, and made of finer materials, generally coloured or embroidered with flowers in silk. They have coloured trousers, tighter than those of the other sex, and a small cap of bright-coloured silk embroidered with gold thread, which comes down to the forehead or the ears, and a large sheet, either of plain or printed cotton, which they throw over their heads, and with which they hide their faces when a stranger approaches. In the west the females often tie a black handkerchief over their caps.* They divide the hair on the brow, and plait it into two locks, which fasten behind. Their ornaments are strings of Venetian sequins worn round their heads, and chains of gold or silver which are hooked up, and end in two large balls hanging down on either side. Earrings and finger-rings are worn, as are pendans in the middle cartilage of the nose. Such is the common dress of either sex; but it is subject to infinite variety, as it happens to be influenced by foreign intercourse, or difference of fashion in particular tribes. In towns the fashions approach those of Persia or India, according to the proximity of the one or the other country.

The notices we have hitherto given refer principally to the Afghan race at large; we shall now advert to a few of these peculiarities which distinguish individual tribes. The whole of these, according to their own traditions, have originally descended from the four sons of Kyse or Kais Abdooreesheed, who, whether a real or only an imaginary character, is the person to whom all their genealogies refer. Their names were *Serrabun*, *Ghoorghoost*, *Betnee*, and *Kurleh*; but these primary stocks have long been practically lost sight of amid the multiplied ramifications that have since taken place, and

* A Persian fashion.

more convenient divisions have been suggested by the varying circumstances of the nation. We shall follow as far as possible the order pursued by Mr. Elphinstone, and classify the whole, or at least the most important tribes, into several grand branches. These may be geographically arranged as follow :—

Eastern Division.	Central Division, including Mountain-tribes.	Western Division.
Eussuffzhees.*	Jaujees.	DOORANEEES.
Berdoranees.	Toorees.	Zeeruk. Pusjptar.
Otmankheil.	Jadrans.	Populzhees. Noorzhees.
Turkolances.	Vizerees.	Allekkozhees. Alizchee.
Peshawer tribes.	Murheils.	Baurikzhees. Iskhakzhees.
Khyberees.	Moonakheil.	Atchikzhees. Khouganee.
Bungash.	Zmurrees.	Makoo.
Khuttuk.	Sheeranees.	
	Speen Tereens.	
Neighbourhood of Salt Range.		GHILJEEES.
Essaukhel.		Tooran. Boorhan
Sheetuks.		
Bunnoomes.		Hotukee. Solymankheil.
Dower.		Tokhee. Alikhel.
Khoostees.		Under.
		Turkhee.
Tribe Dialect.	Dowluthkheil. Meankheil. Baboors. Stooreanees. Gundepoor.	Sheerpah. Kharotee. Wurduka. Baraiches. Tor Tereens.

The appellation of Berdooranees was bestowed by Ahmed Shah Doorane upon those tribes who inhabit the north-eastern part of Afghanistan, enclosed between the Hindoo-Coosh, the Salt Range, and the range of Solyman ; and they exhibit several points of difference from the others. Situated in that part of the country which has always been the thoroughfare between the two great empires of Hindostan and Persia, and near the cities frequently occupied by the sovereign, their manners and customs have attained greater refinement than those in more remote districts ; and being an agricultural people, the clashing interests of villages have

* The word *Zekoo*, which forms the termination of the names of so many of the clans, corresponds exactly to the Scotch *Vick* or *Mac*, or the Arab *Ben*, and means sons ; thus, Eussuffzhees means the sons of Eussuff.

given rise to jealousy. They are therefore found to be brave, but quarrelsome ; active, industrious, and acute, but selfish, and not unfrequently dishonest,—more bigoted and intolerant than the others, and very much under the influence of their *mollahs*. They are likewise more remarkable for vice and debauchery ; and may, with the modifications arising from situation and circumstances, be ranked as the worst of the Afghans.

It is probably a sense of the dangerous consequences of this quarrelsome disposition that has given rise to the peculiar alliances called *goondees*, which prevail among all the Berdooranee tribes except that of Eussuffzehee. These are a species of league,* offensive and defensive, formed by individuals or societies, either for the purpose of accomplishing some particular object, or for mutual protection on all occasions ; and they are considered as more binding than even the ties of blood.

Among the tribes just named, the most numerous as well as the most haughty, insolent, and turbulent, are the Eussuffzehees, who are said to amount to 700,000. Their original station was near Garra and Nôoskee of Beloochistan ; but being driven eastward about the end of the thirteenth century, they settled, after various changes of fortune, like a swarm of locusts, upon the lands of the Dilazauks, whom, after throwing themselves upon their hospitality, they stripped of their possessions. They now occupy all the northern part of the plain of Peshawer, with the valleys of Punjora, Swaut, and Boonere,—a fertile district, which, in spite of the disturbed state of the country, is cultivated with great industry and success.

These barbarians are notorious for the anarchy which reigns among their olooses, and which arises from the fierce impatience of authority that characterizes the whole race. A famous saint among them is said to have bequeathed to his tribe a blessing and a curse,—“That they should always be free, but never united.” Considering the Afghan notion of freedom, he did not hazard much by the last part of his prediction.

Even in villages where members of various clans reside, as is frequently the case, each has its own cundee or quarter,

* Mr. Elphinstone considers them as resembling the Saxon *Sodalitia*.

the several inhabitants of which have no more connexion with one another than if they lived in different parts of the country. Scarcely a day passes without a quarrel,—each injury produces retaliation, and hence spring murders, ambuscades, and all kinds of confusion, suspicion, and strife. In every hamlet individuals are seen wearing armour to secure themselves against the designs of their secret foes, or surrounded for the same purpose with armed soldiers ; and these private feuds spread from individuals to families, and from them to clans, until whole tribes are involved in bloodshed for years, and even for generations.

The Eussuffzehees, although described as an agricultural people, do not themselves, unless when very poor, perform much menial labour. The weight of this falls principally upon a class of persons termed by them fakirs, a sort of *villains* or servants of the tribe. Of these, some are the original inhabitants of the country reduced to servitude by the invaders ; others are strangers driven by famine or oppression from their native provinces ; and the rest are Afghans, degraded by circumstances to this low condition. These drudges are not permitted to hold land, nor to be present at jeergas, nor are they considered as members of the commonwealth. They are subject to the person on whose grounds they reside, who is called their khawund (lord or master) ; to whom they pay a certain tax ; for whom they must work gratis ; and who can beat or kill them without incurring any penalty. On the other hand, the superior is bound by custom and honour to protect his fakirs. These persons may pursue what trade they like for their own benefit ; they may even rent land, provided only that they pay to the khawund the dues and taxes fixed by usage, beyond which no one ever attempts to push his exactions. The general treatment of them is mild ; and the liberty which they possess of removing at will from the estate of one master to another is a powerful check against oppression.

Living thus amid a conquered people, and scouting every idea of dependance, the Eussuffzehee is filled with the thoughts of his own dignity and importance. So great is the pride of this nation, that they cannot endure to be put upon a footing even with the Dooranees, who are acknowledged by all to be the first of the Afghan states. They are irritable, suspicious, haughty, repulsive in their manners,

fierce, and overbearing ; and, besides, they are generally stout men. "In those whose appearance is most characteristic of their tribe, one is struck with their fair complexions, gray eyes, and red beards ; by the military affectation of their carriage, and by their haughty insolent demeanour."* They are, however, kind and liberal to their clansmen ; and a subscription is easily procured to relieve any one who may have fallen into indigent circumstances. In the upper part of their country they are sober and free from debauchery, but less warlike than such as live in the plains, who, on the other hand, are addicted to every description of profligacy. Those who dwell in the hills are illiterate and ignorant to an extraordinary degree. Mr. Elphinstone relates, that some of the Naikpeekheil, a clan of this tribe, found a mollah one day copying the Koran, and, not well understanding what he was about, struck off his head, saying, " You tell us these books come from God, and here you are making them yourself." Their companions blamed this rashness, and explained the mistake ; upon which the murderers owned they had been inconsiderate. Such, however, is the trifling importance attached to human life among the Eussuffzehees !

The Turkolanees, who are a far less numerous tribe, differ in many respects from their fierce neighbours. They are all subject to a powerful chief, who exercises over them a very absolute authority. Still they are brave, industrious, cheerful, and fond of amusement.

The Khyberees, who possess the upper branches of the Speenghur Mountain, and derive their name from the difficult pass of Khyber, on the right of the Cabul river, between Peshawer and Jellalabad, are the most rapacious and treacherous robbers of all Afghanistan. A previous arrangement, with the payment of a small sum, and the presence of a single individual, will secure to a traveller an unmolested passage through the territories of every other tribe ; and even without this he may have some chance, at all events, of escaping un plundered. But no sooner do the hoof-tramps of a passenger sound up the hollow ravines of their formidable mountains, than troops of marauders flock to the spot : and if a caravan should appear, the ridges bristle with hundreds of them, matchlock in hand, who sit motionless as

* Elphinstone.

the gray stones around them, watching its approach, and choosing their victims. They are a lean but muscular race, with long gaunt faces, high noses and cheekbones, and wear dark-blue turbans, with sandals of neatly-plaited straw or dwarf-palm. They are capital marksmen and hill-soldiers; carry firearms, with a wooden fork attached for a rest, swords, and short spears; and are altogether more uncouth than most of their countrymen. In winter they live in terrace-roofed houses; in summer, in moveable huts of mat, and are very impatient of heat.

The tribes of Peshawer require but little notice; for, as they dwell chiefly in the plain of that name, their manners approximate to those of the Eussuffzehees, while their vicinity to the chief cities reduces them to a state of greater obedience to the king, and of subjection to their own chiefs.

The Khuttuks, who occupy the country on the banks of the Indus from the Cabul river to the Salt Range, are said to be a tall well-favoured people, remarkable for honesty and orderly conduct. Their southern oolooses inhabit the most dreary country that can be imagined. Nothing is to be seen but rugged and bare mountains confusedly heaped together; nothing is heard but the roar of the salt torrents that rush down the valleys; and the forlorn appearance of two or three straw-built hovels once in twenty or thirty miles rather adds to the desolation of the scene.

There is not much in the tribes of Daman which requires a separate or particular notice. They are a larger and more bony race than the Berdooranees, often fair, and universally wear long hair and beards. Instead of the shirt and cap of the Afghans, they prefer a close-fitting dress of white cotton, resembling that of Upper India: they have large loose turbans; and in winter throw around their persons great-coats of brown or gray woollen, and poosteens. They are little under the control of government; and, until within these fifty or sixty years, lived in as complete anarchy as the Eussuffzehees. Since that time an establishment of magistrates has been formed, named chelwastee (from the Pushtoo word signifying forty, the number of which they consist in each khel), eligible by the mulicks or heads of families, and chosen for their personal character and qualifications. These functionaries are in their turn placed under a chief, called meerchelwastee, whom the whole tribe are sworn to support,

and whose office, being annual, threatens not to endanger the public liberty. This establishment tends greatly to the maintenance of order, not only by its own weight, but by supporting the authority of the several khans. It is also one of the distinguishing points between the tribes of Daman and their countrymen; from whom also they are said to differ, in being more simple and honest, less intolerant, bigoted, and litigious, and generally less vicious and debauched.

Not so the Gundepoors, a branch from the Daman stock; who are described as a lawless race, plundering all strangers, stealing from all their neighbours, and continually quarrelling among themselves. They are great merchants, and make annual expeditions to India and Khorasan; yet this sort of intercourse seems to have had no effect in softening down the rudeness and brutality for which they are notorious.

The Baboors, on the other hand, are a civilized people, employing themselves much in merchandise, and, on the whole, the most-respectable and flourishing nation in Daman. The Stooreanees were formerly all shepherds; but a quarrel with a tribe of *Caukers*, through whose territory they had to pass with their flocks to the summer pastures, caused so many disputes, that the one-half betook themselves to agriculture,—an example which was gradually followed by the rest. All these tribes have ryots, who, like the fakirs of the Eussuffzehees, cultivate the lands of their masters and pay a tax for protection, but cannot quit them without permission, although they may, if they please, leave the tribe altogether.

We next come to notice the members of the central division. Of these, the Jaujees and the Toorees, who are hereditary enemies, live in the glens and valleys of the Solyman range southward of the Suffeid-Koh. The country of the former is colder, wilder, and higher than that of the latter; the sides of the mountains are covered with pines; and the inhabitants, who live in houses partly hollowed out of the rock, burn fires day and night the greater part of the year, and wear shirts made of blanket. The Jadrans are a people remarkable chiefly for their disgusting vices, who dwell in a pleasant district westward of the rich plain of Bunnoo.

The Sheeranees inhabit the borders of the Tucht e Solyman, a wild inaccessible country, including a few small but

fertile valleys which they live by cultivating. They appear to be very poor and uncivilized ; plunder every traveller who comes within their reach ; and are at war with all the world. Yet their faith is said to be unblemished ; and when a stranger takes the precaution of hiring a Sheeranee escort, he is secure in passing through their lands. They are generally of middle stature, thin but hardy and active, have bold features, gray eyes, and a manly appearance combined with wildness. They live in miserable holes scooped out in the hill, each having but a single apartment and entrance, which last they close at night, even during winter, with a bush of thorn. They sleep beside their fires on black hair carpets, wrapped in their sheep-skin cloaks. Their dress is a coarse blanket tied about the middle, with another thrown over the shoulders. On their feet they wear sandals, the soles of which are made of coarsely-tanned bullock-hides, and a piece of cotton cloth is twisted round their heads. Their chief, whom they call Necka (grandfather), is the only one who is clothed in Moultan silk, which they deem the extreme of magnificence. He is the regular and only dispenser of justice,—he hears the parties, breathes a prayer, and, as if from the inspiration of the Deity, utters a decree, which dread of supernatural punishment prevents them from disobeying.

The Zmurrees so closely resemble the Sheranees, except in being less addicted to predatory habits, that we need not describe them. They occupy a similar country in the range of Solyman, and are equally wild and uncivilized.

The Vizerees are another barbarous, savage tribe, who dwell in the territory north-west of the two last-mentioned races, among mountains nearly covered with pine. They live in little societies ; some under the dominion of powerful khans, some under a democratic form of government, but all are remarkable for cultivating peace. They are, however, notorious plunderers ; though the smallest escort secures to a traveller an hospitable reception. The Vizerees consist of a fixed and a moving population : the former occupy small hamlets of thatched or terraced houses, or, in some places, rocky caves, many of which are lofty enough to admit a camel, and others are three stories high. The wandering portion, which is the largest, dwell in moveable hovels formed

of mats, straw huts, or tents, and in spring they go to the mountains, until the cold of winter drives them back again.

There remains only to be mentioned the long valley of Zawura, which opens on the plain of Tull and Chooteeallee, inhabited by the *Speen* or White Tereens, a people employed in agriculture, and, as well as their neighbours the *Tor* or Black Tereens, great carriers of merchandise between Upper Sinde and Candahar.

We come now to notice the more noble and important of the Afghan tribes who inhabit the western section of that country,—The Dooranees and the Ghiljees. Their territory, unlike the eastern division, consists in a great degree of high and bleak downs interspersed with hills. In some parts it is desert,—in others poorly cultivated,—in all bare, open, and fitted rather for pasture than the plough.

Scattered over an extensive country, the Western Afghans are too distant from each other to acquire the vices which belong to a dense population; each horde guides its flocks over its own extensive pastures, or cultivates the banks of a stream, or procures water from a cahreez without the risk of interference with their neighbours. This exemption from rivalry distinguishes them, as well as a sort of primitive simplicity, which bears a greater resemblance to the Scriptural accounts of the early days of man than to any thing among modern nations.

The pastoral tribes, who form the principal distinction between the Western and Eastern Afghans, live in tents of black blanket or camlet, called *kizhdees*. These are from twenty to twenty-five feet long, ten or twelve broad, and eight or nine high, supported by three poles in a row, the sides being well closed in by a curtain all round. Some belonging to the khans are spacious, and so lofty as to admit a camel; and those which are intended to be stationary, being usually lined with felt, form warm and comfortable dwellings. The greater number are moveable; their owners, like the Eeliauts of Persia, changing periodically from their winter stations or *kishlake* to their summer pastures or *yelaks*. The country of the Dooranees is about 400 miles long by 130 broad, and extends from the Paropamisan Mountains to those of the Khojeh Amran range. Its nature has already been described. This tribe, formerly called Abdallees, received their present appellation from Ahmed Shah, their sovereign,

in consequence of the dream of a famous saint ; and he at the same time took the title of Shah Doore Dooran.

The nine principal clans, which appear in our classification of the western tribes as having sprung from the two great branches of Zeeruk and Punjyaw, have increased to a multitude of smaller ones ; but that of Populzehee, is the most distinguished of all, as having given a king to the Afghan people. The principal seat of the Suddoozhees (that subdivision from which the royal family takes its origin) is near Sheher Suffa, in the lower valley of the Turnuk. Mr. Elphinstone calculates the whole population of the Dooranee country at 800,000 souls.

The leading points of difference between their nation and the other Afghans lie principally in the nature of their internal administration and government. The king is their hereditary chief and military commander : to him all heads of tribes are bound to render the service of a horseman* for every plough of land ; and the officers commanding these yeomen are the civil magistrates of the country from which they are drawn. These sirdars are further employed in offices of state and emolument about court, where they acquire a taste for wealth and splendour ; and the patronage thus placed in the hands of the crown forms a counterpoise to the power which the petty leaders might otherwise be disposed to turn against the sovereign. The working of this system when in full operation is said to have been excellent, and to have greatly promoted good order and the happiness of the people. The internal government of the clans is more justly balanced, and far better maintained than among any of the other tribes ; and though the spirit of revenge and retaliation is not less strong than elsewhere, the hand of law is able to repress its effects. From these favourable circumstances the progress of civilization and improvement has been infinitely greater among the agricultural Dooranees than among the eastern states ; the benefits of which are obvious in every part of their private and social establishments. Their villages are more respectable, and their houses better con-

* This remarkable innovation on the customs of an Afghan tribe was effected by Nadir Shah, who introduced the system of military service among the Ghiljees and Dooranees, when he returned to them under this stipulation part of the country he had wrested from them by conquest.

structed ; while comforts and even luxuries are common within their dwellings.

Almost every hamlet has in its neighbourhood the castle of a khan,—places constructed rather for privacy than strength ; where the chief has several apartments ; lodgings for his family, relatives, and dependants ; storehouses for his property, and stables for his horses. At one of the gates there is always a Mehman Khaneh, where travellers are entertained, and where the villagers assemble to hear the news and talk with strangers. The khans themselves are said to be sober, decent, moderate, and plain men,—a species of small country *lords*, who treat their inferiors with mildness, and in return are regarded by them with respect and esteem. The lands are cultivated principally by *buzgurs*,* by hired labourers, or by slaves. The first of these are often the poorer individuals of the tribe ; the labourers are chiefly *Tajiks*, or Afghan Humsayahs ; the slaves, who are not numerous, are either *Caufirs* or Persians taken by the Belooches, with a few Africans imported from the coast of Zanguebar.

The Dooranee are generally handsome stout men, with good complexions and fine beards. Some have plump round faces, but the greater number are marked by the usual high Afghan features. Their demeanour, though manly, is modest, and they are generally void of frivolity or vulgarity. They are religious yet tolerant, and are considered the bravest, most hospitable, and, on the whole, the worthiest of their race. They are not, however, altogether strangers to rapacity ; for, though by no means such determined robbers as most other Afghan tribes, they are not without a considerable inclination to plunder. The Atchikzees must be excepted from even this measured praise ; as they are rough and barbarous in their manners, filthy in their habits, inhospitable, irreligious, and, to crown all, most inhuman marauders.

The country of the Ghiljees lies to the east of that of the Dooranee, and occupies the upper section of the valley of the Turnuk, together with the greater part of that which runs north from Ghizni to Cabul, and a portion of the Cabul valley itself as far as the Berdooranee territory. In this tract is contained some of the principal cities of the kingdom,—Ghizni, Cabul, and Kelat e Ghiljee,—with some fine

* A sort of petty tenantry.

cultivated districts, surrounded by still more extensive ranges of stony mountains, barren hills, and desert plains. The climate is generally cold,—the winter severer than in England,—the summer not much hotter.

The Ghiljees were formerly the leading tribe of Afghanistan. Only a century ago they conquered and held temporary possession of Persia, and, though fallen from their sovereign state, they still remain a numerous, brave, and high-minded people. Their enmity to the Dooranees, who have wrested from them the sceptre and importance they once possessed, is deep and deadly.* Yet the ascendancy of that tribe is so firmly established, that all struggle is now at an end, and they sullenly submit to the government of the conqueror. According to Mr. Elphinstone's estimate, they may amount to 100,000 families, and their principal divisions have been marked in the classification of tribes. The Hotekee and Tokhee are the noblest clans; from the first spring the Ghiljee kings, from the latter their viziers. But the state of internal government among them is of a very inferior character to that of their rivals. The khans have little power beyond their own families, and in the parts of their country near the towns the king's governor supplies the deficiency; while, at a greater distance, the multitude of small communities into which the kheils are broken, betrays the anarchy that everywhere prevails. In some places the Chelwastee system, which they have been forced to adopt, has produced a salutary effect; but feuds are nevertheless numerous and increasing. Yet, notwithstanding these unhappy quarrels, they are not considered as a violent or an irritable people. They live in much harmony with each other, are very hospitable, and deservedly rank as the second in character among the tribes of Afghanistan. The western Ghiljees, in manners, customs, dress, and appearance, closely resemble the Dooranees their neighbours. Those to the east differ widely from their brethren, and as-

* A Ghiljee, speaking to Mr. Elphinstone of the animosity of his tribe to that of the Dooranees, admitted that they were "good people. They dress well, they are hospitable, they are not treacherous; yet we would go among them and serve them, eat their salt, and then set fire to their houses; our hearts burn because we have lost the kingdom, and we wish to see the Dooranees as poor as ourselves. They say, 'Come, let us be united.' You have taken our kingdom, killed our brothers, and led away our women prisoners, and shall we unite with you?"

similar rather in dress and habits to the tribes of Damaa. They are perhaps the fairest and handsomest of all the Afghans.

The term Tajuk is used, as we have before observed, in opposition to Toork,—the peaceable to the warlike ; and it was applied to the subdued Persians by their Tartar masters. The word, whether descriptive of the same people or not, is common over a considerable part of Asia. In Afghanistan, they are supposed to be the descendants of Arabs, who, displaced in a great measure by their conquerors, now live scattered about upon land which they once perhaps cultivated as their own. They everywhere occupy fixed habitations, as tenants or servants to the lords of the soil, though sometimes in villages which belonged to themselves. They are in this state a mild, sober, industrious, and peaceable people, with more of the virtues than the faults of their rulers, and all zealous Sonnees. They are most numerous in towns, and compose the principal part of the population around the great cities. They are on good terms with the Afghans, who, though they regard them as inferiors, do not treat them with contempt. The inhabitants of Cohistan, the Burrukees and Poormoolees, with some other races, are all considered by Mr. Elphinstone as coming under the description of Tajuks, who, according to him, are found in the dominions of the King of Cabul to the extent of a million and a half.

The principal cities of Afghanistan are Candahar, Ghizni, Cabul, and Peshawer ; and of these the two first are celebrated both, in Eastern romance and history. The ancient castle of Candahar was situated upon a high rocky hill ; but Nadir Shah, after taking the fortress, perhaps unwilling to leave so strong a place in the hands of a people in whom he could not confide, destroyed both, and founded upon the contiguous plain a new city, which he called Nadirabad. This, which was completed by Ahmed Shah Dooranee, is now denominated Candahar, and occupied, in the time of Foster, a square of about three miles in compass, surrounded by an ordinary fortification. It was then populous and flourishing ; and, as it lies in the route which directly connects India with Persia, it is still an important *entrepot*. The bazaar is well filled, and many rich Hindoo merchants are found there, who occupy an extensive range of shops filled with valuable merchandise.

The ruins of ancient Ghazni form a striking contrast to the flourishing residence of Candahar. Little remains to tell of the glories of the mighty Mahmood. The Palace of "Reisetty," like other gay visions of human ingenuity, has passed away; while the gloomy mausoleum which contains the ashes of Ghazni is a solemn mound to the pride of memory. There is now a magnificient building, and six columns of the antique pillars of the successive rulers remain in process of repair. The surrounding walls are brought from the ruins of Ghazni, Chaldiran, and the like huge fortresses; and the main gateway is still in the same style of the "Izamal-khana." In Ghazni, the great temple of the marble rooms, and the fine remains of the Gothic-like monarchs, the most singular and interesting objects across the stream, were, though ruined, when that capital was taken by the Afghans, still standing on the elevation of 100 feet high, marking the spot where stood the celebrated mosque impiously called "The Colossal Bazaar," but a few mounds of rubbish and stones, and all that remains of the splendid baths, the minarets, the colleges, and noble dwellings that once adorned the original of the Bazaar. The present town, which stands upon elevated, consists of 1000 houses, surrounded by stone walls, including three great bazaars, and a covered

Cabul, the capital of the kingdom, is enclosed on three sides by hills along the top of which runs a decayed road entering a gate, after passing the fort or castle of Bala Hisar, northward of this entrance, a king's palace, in which are the royal ornaments of a gilt brass, used as a state-prison centre of the city is an open square, each two stories high, the buildings of Cabul are built by its power of resisting fire, and is visited. Though not a handsome town, Being watered by fine streams,

the beauty and abundance of its flowers are proverbial ; its fruits are in estimation far and near ; and its climate and scenery are considered as unrivalled in the East. One of the most pleasing as well as interesting spots is the tomb of the celebrated Baber, the founder of the Mogul empire in India. It is situated at the top of an eminence near the city, among beds of anemones and other flowers, commanding a magnificent prospect, which that great and kind-hearted monarch used often to enjoy when passing his hours of leisure with his gallant companions, on the spot where his remains now lie interred.

Peshawer, the second city in point of population, stands in a fine plain, but upon an irregular surface. It is five miles round, and when visited by Mr. Elphinstone might contain about 100,000 inhabitants. The houses were built of brick, generally unburnt, in wooden frames, and commonly three stories high. The streets were paved, but narrow and inconvenient. Two or three brooks ran through the town, and were even there skirted with willows and mulberry-trees. The streets and bazaars were crowded with men of all nations and languages, and the shops filled with all sorts of goods ; but at that time the city was the residence of the court, and had consequently all the bustle and glitter attendant upon such a presence.

We now proceed to give a short account of the kingdom of Cabul, as it existed under the Dooranee dynasty. It is unnecessary for our purpose to describe the struggles of that people and the Ghiljees for power previous to the reign of Nadir Shah. On the day of confusion which succeeded the murder of this monarch in June, 1747, a battle took place between the several bodies of troops, in which Ahmed Khan Abdallee headed the Afghans and Uzbecks against the Persians. But the conflict terminated without a decisive result ; and Ahmed, fighting his way through Khorasan, reached Candahar with not more than three thousand horse. A treasure coming from India for Nadir, which had been seized by the inhabitants of that place, fell into his hands after some opposition ; and Ahmed, at the age of twenty-three, assumed the ensigns of royalty at Candahar, in the month of October, 1747,—the Dooranee, Kuzzilbash, Belooche, and Hazar chiefs assisting at his coronation.

Possessed of a genius well calculated for command, am

prudence and decision beyond his years, the young shah commenced his reign by the wise measure of conciliating his own tribe; after which he gradually gained an ascendancy over the others,—a difficult and delicate task, in which he succeeded partly by a show of moderation, and partly by firmness, and occasional coercion, to which the strength of his party among the Dooranies enabled him to have recourse. But the most effectual means he used for consolidating the discordant mass of the Afghan tribes was foreign conquest; thereby at once giving employment to their military genius, and satisfying their love of plunder.

The feebleness of the Uzbek and Indian empires had been exposed and increased by their contests with Nadir, and Persia was already distracted by the dissensions which had broken out in the family of her late sovereign. India, at once rich and weak, was the most attractive point to commence with, and against it, accordingly, did Ahmed Shah first direct his attention and his arms.

His conquests there having been already described in another volume of this work,* do not require any farther mention. Suffice it to say, that they confirmed his power; and the monarchy thus established, which extended from Nishapour to Sirhind of the Punjaub, from the Oxus to the sea, was fashioned on the model of that of Persia.

It was natural that the follower of a successful sovereign should avail himself of his master's experience; and accordingly we find that in the general administration of government, and even in the arrangement of the household, and distribution of the offices of state,† the example supplied by Nadir was closely imitated, modified only in such points as might suit the peculiarities of the Afghan nation. We shall therefore omit all details on this subject, and the rather, because subsequent events have so deranged the whole system as virtually to have annihilated it for the present altogether.

Ahmed Shah died‡ at Murgha, in the Atchikzehee coun-

* Family Library, No. XLVII. British India, vol. i. p. 260-262.

† These were very numerous, and each was distinguished by a rich and peculiar dress, which together with the brilliant display of armour and jewels, particularly about the sovereign's person, threw an air of great splendour over the Dooranees court.

‡ Of a cancer in his face.

try, in June, 1773, in the fiftieth year of his age, and twenty-sixth of his government. He was succeeded by his son Timur Shah, a prince who, from his natural indolence, was ill qualified to maintain the fabric of power which his father had raised, or to rule with efficiency so turbulent a nation as the Afghans. After a reign of twenty years, marked chiefly by rebellions and conspiracies, during which the weakness of the crown gradually increased, he died at Cabul in 1793 without naming an heir,—an omission of little moment, as a faction, headed by his favourite queen and supported by the principal chiefs, placed Shah Zeman upon the throne, and kept him there in spite of all the other princes of the blood.

The fortunes of this prince, who was deficient neither in abilities nor courage, were blasted by an ill-directed ambition, and a mistaken policy, arising from the evil counsels of a haughty, but timid and avaricious minister. While he should have busied himself in consolidating his power at home, and securing the possession of Khorasan, he wasted his time in foolish invasions of India; and, instead of endeavouring to secure the good-will of his own tribe, he disgusted them by neglect, want of confidence, ill-judged parsimony, and finally by downright cruelty. A reign of seven years, which at first gave the fairest promise of success, was thus spent in bootless enterprises, and imbibited by a series of domestic rebellions and dark conspiracies, which at length ended in his ruin. After terrifying the feeble princes of Hindostan, and alarming even the rising power of Britain,* which sent an army to Anoopsheher to check the progress of the Dooranee monarch in his threatened attack upon their ally the Nabob Vizier of Oude, Shah Zeman was forced by disturbances at home to withdraw from the country, and fell a victim to the ambition of a brother and the revenge of an injured statesman.

A serious conspiracy, in which some of the most powerful nobles of the realm were implicated, was discovered by an accomplice, and the whole of those engaged in it were seized and mercilessly put to death. Futeh Khan, the son of Sirafrauz Khan, one of these leaders, and chief of the

* It was with the view of causing a division on the side of Persia, and thus relieving the apprehensions entertained for our Indian dominions that the first embassy under Sir John, then Captain Malcolm, was sent to Persia.

Baurikzehee clan of Dooranees,—a man of great talents and little principle,—fled to Mahmoud, another of the princes of the blood-royal, and Zeman's most formidable competitor for the throne. Encouraged by his support, and strengthened by his genius, the insurgents increased so rapidly that they were able not only to oppose the shah, but finally to gain over his troops, and force him to fly. Betrayed by a mollah in whom he had confided, the unfortunate monarch was seized, and by having his eyes put out with a lancet, was rendered incapable of checking the career of his inhuman relative, or the schemes of his ambitious minister.

But the reign of the usurper was destined to be neither prosperous nor lasting: his indolent, timid, and unprincipled character was ill calculated to uphold an unjust cause. Sujah ul Mulk, the full brother of the unfortunate Zeman, who had been left at Peshawer in charge of the royal family and treasury, immediately, on hearing of the recent events, proclaimed himself king; and, although frequently defeated, he at length, taking advantage of the absence of Futeh Khan the vizier, and of a religious prejudice against Mahmoud, succeeded in overpowering all opposition, and in seizing that prince in his palace at Cabul. With a generosity unknown in these fierce struggles, he spared the eyes of his fallen kinsman,—an act of lenity which afterward caused his own ruin.

Sujah ul Mulk, now king of Cabul, found his reward in a very disturbed and shortlived success. Futeh Khan made his submission to him; but his moderate demands were imprudently rejected, and he retired in disgust to his castle of Geereesh, where he employed himself in intrigues against a prince who, as he conceived, had both injured and insulted him. Rebellions were fomented, disaffection encouraged, and at length, in an attempt of the discontented vizier to raise another prince to the throne, Mahmoud escaped, and succeeded in joining his wily friend Futeh. This event was productive of the most disastrous consequences. A year afterward, the mission to Cabul, under Mr. Elphinstone, found the king still in possession of the throne. But before they quitted the country his fortune had yielded to the influence of his rival; and, after a succession of reverses, the ill-fated Sujah was forced to seek protection with Runjeet Sing, chief of the Seiks. Disappointed in not meeting with

the sympathy or assistance he hoped for, and inhospitably plundered* by that ruler, the exiled monarch once more took to flight, and threw himself upon the generosity of the British government, who afforded him an asylum at Loodheana.

In the meantime Mahmoud, though nominally king, was nothing more than a pageant in the hands of the ambitious Futeh Khan, who conferred upon the members of his own family the principal offices of state and governments of the realm. But the country was disturbed by constant rebellions ; and the Seiks not only made rapid progress in the Punjab, but succeeded in getting possession of the celebrated valley of Cashmere, which had been one of the Afghan acquisitions. Endeavouring to compensate by conquests in the west for their losses in the east, Futeh proceeded to reduce Herat ; and, by treachery as it is alleged, he made himself master of that city and of the person of Feroze Mirza, another son of the late Timur Shah, who had been residing there in retirement, paying to Persia a trifling tribute as the price of exemption from molestation. An intrigue with a discontented chieftain of Khorasan was at length the cause of this able but unprincipled minister's downfall. Seduced by his representations and promises of assistance, he attempted to carry the Dooranee arms further into Khorasan ; but, being worsted in an action with the prince-governor of Mushed and thrown from his horse, it was not without difficulty that he regained Herat. There, by some singular oversight, he fell into the power of Prince Camran, the son of Mahmoud, who, cruel and overbearing himself, and long since disgusted with the arrogance of the minister's demeanour, reproached him with his unauthorized enterprise and signal failure, and directed his eyes to be instantly put out,—an order which was executed upon the spot.

This inhuman act of revenge soon brought its own punishment. The brothers and relatives of the unfortunate vizier fled each to his own stronghold, where they immediately

* The unfortunate king in his flight had managed to carry off several valuable jewels, and among others the celebrated diamond known by the name of "Koh e Noor," or "Hill of Light," described by Tavernier. But the ruler of the Seiks having learned this fact, never ceased to persecute his fallen guest till he consented to sell him this invaluable gem at a nominal price.

† Mohammed Khan Carooose, chief of Toorbut.

busied themselves in taking precautions for their safety,—strengthening their respective parties, and exciting rebellions against the king and his son. Shah Mahmoud and Camran, on the other hand, carrying the blind Futeh Khan along with them, sought to allay these disturbances ; and endeavoured to compel their unfortunate prisoner to use his influence with his kindred to desist from their treasonable attempts, and return to their allegiance. But he steadily and indignantly rejected all their persuasions. "The eyes," said he, "which lighted you to a throne, and maintained you there, are now sightless ;—without them I am useless, and you are weak. Your barbarous imprudence has deprived you of your only sure guide, and, sooner or later, fall you must and will." Exasperated at his determined resistance, they directed the miserable man to be tortured, and afterward put him to death, as has been averred, with their own hands.

The prophecy thus uttered was very soon fulfilled. Mahmoud and Camran were rapidly deprived of all their dominions, which, indeed, they did not dare to re-enter. Herat and its dependancies alone remained, and there they resided, paying to the crown of Persia the same tribute which had been formerly exacted from Ferose Mirza. The kingdom has since been rent into a multitude of petty factions, headed by the brother of the murdered vizier, or other great lords of the country, some of whom, in order to cloak their own ambitious designs, set up a pageant of the royal family, taken from the state-prison of Bala Hissar. Several of the remaining princes have, however, fled for refuge to Mushed in Khorasan, where they subsist upon the precarious hospitality of the government of that place ; and, whatever other power may hereafter rule in Afghanistan, no doubt can be entertained that the glory of the house of Sudoozehee has set for ever.

CHAPTER XII.

Natural History of Persia.

Geology of Persia—Knowledge of it limited—Table-land—Islands—Primitive Mountains between Ispahan and Teheran—Turquoise Mines of Elburz Mountains—Mineralogy of the country almost unknown—Iron, Copper, and Lead Ores—Rock-salt—Sulphur—Vegetable Productions—Animals—Arabian Horses—The Ass—Mule—Camel—Cow—Sheep—Dogs—Wild Animals—Lion—Tiger—Hyena—Wolf—Jackal—Red-deer—Wild hog—Mountain Goat and Mountain Sheep—Birds of Prey—Eagle, Vulture, Hawk—Game birds—Bustard, Partridge, Quail—Fishes—Reptiles—Insects.

Our knowledge of Persian geology is limited and imperfect. The author, indeed, is not aware of any other information on the subject than that which is contained in certain memoirs furnished by himself to the Geological Society, together with a series of specimens collected in his travels through the country.

Persia has already been described as an elevated table-land, varied with many ranges and groups of mountains. Commencing at the south, we may observe that the Gulf appears to be a basin, shallow at its upper extremity, and lying in a calcareous formation, the extent of which on the Arabian coast is great, while on the Persian shore it stretches from some point in Mekran, probably to Bussora. Its limits towards the interior are uncertain; there seems reason, however, from all that can be collected, to believe, that from Candahar on the east, to Kermanshah on the west, the major part of the mountains are calcareous.

The islands in the Gulf are principally of the same description. In Kishma, the largest, the cliffs of limestone were capped with coralline sandstone, which is sonorous, and yields with difficulty to the hammer. The sand thus agglutinated forms layers, ridges, and blocks, beneath which are beds of white, gray, or yellow marl, with oyster and clam shells, and much coral. The same remarks apply to

the coast of Kerman at Gombroon, and probably at all other points.

The island of Ormuz presents a singular assemblage of summits and ridges. The rock most prevalent is of a dark-brown or reddish colour, tinged with iron, and abounding in specular iron-ore and ochre. Then occur peaks of gypsum, as white as snow, with conglomerates, in which quartz and felspar are imbedded in light-gray hornstone. Pebbles of greenish chert, plasma, and brown or red flint, with particles of iron ore, are also found, with abundance of copper pyrites, crystallized in pentagonal dodecahedrons. Salt is extremely abundant, and not a fresh spring is found in the island. The same description, nearly, will suit Larrak, Anjar, and Polior.

The low plain from Bushire to Dalakee is thickly sprinkled with sulphate of lime in crystals, the rocks and gravel being generally calcareous. The whole mountainous tract between Dalakee and Shiraz, and from thence to Ispahan, in the course of the usual routes, consists invariably of limestone and gypsum. The former is principally compact, splintery, of various shades of gray and yellow, assuming a stratified form, dipping to the north and north-eastward at angles varying from 15 to 45 degrees, but often disturbed and distorted as if by violence. The gypsum appears sometimes composing whole hills, at others in small lumps or veins, and frequently in masses of fine alabaster. Salt is very abundant in the ranges between Dalakee and Shiraz. Sulphuric acid is found, sometimes in a disengaged state, impregnating certain earthy substances which impart it to water. Chalcedony is picked up in the course of several streams near Shiraz. In the higher regions between that place and Ispahan, nodules of chert were found in the limestone, as also pebbles of quartz and green serpentine, in a state of conglomerate united by a calcareous cement.

Indications of a more primitive character showed themselves in the heights near Dehgirdoo, in knolls of clay-slate, among which masses of quartz rock occasionally protruded. This description probably applies to the whole mountainous tract from Kerman to Kermanshah.

Between Ispahan and Teheran the mountains were found to assume an aspect more decidedly primitive. Near their basis the upper and under strata were calcareous, tinged of-

various colours by iron, while the middle position was occupied by siliceous rocks, and the union between the two was so intimate as sometimes to be nearly indeterminable. Clay-slate was next observed, surmounted by granular limestone, and occasionally traversed by trap-dykes. Curious conglomerates also occurred, some containing nummulites with white crystals running in veins through a cement of yellow or brown sand ;—others enclosing agate-like kernels of a brown hue. In breaking a piece of compact limestone containing nummulites, an echinus was discovered nearly seven inches in diameter. Higher up, granite, clay-porphyry, and coarse-grained granular quartz, quartz with chlorite, mica-slate, and trap-porphyry, made their appearance. The summits of the mountain, so far as could be distinguished for snow, were composed of dark iron-stained felspar-porphyry, reposing upon granite. White selenite lay plentifully scattered about. On the northern side of the ridge also these rocks were abundant ; but masses of trap-porphyry often occurred amid the granite, and veins or strata of light-coloured clay-porphyry occasionally traversed the granite and felspar-porphyry in a direction opposite to that of their strata. On descending to the skirts, calcareous substances reappeared plentifully, in the shape of earthy or marly hillocks of various colours, from ash-gray to dark-red and yellow. In one low range, near Kinaraghird, these hillocks contained much dark compact felspar, and a quantity of amygdaloid, with prase in green-coated kernels of great beauty.

The long range of mountains, extending from the plains of Mogan on the west to the Paropamisan hills on the east, and which have been denominated the Elburz, are supposed to possess a primitive character. Porphyry coloured with chlorite, and compact felspar with green earth, were found in abundance in the torrent-beds ;—granite and mountain-limestone more rarely. Their skirts, however, exhibited the usual predominance of calcareous matter ;—masses of various-coloured earth or marl, intermixed with glittering selenite, lay in confused deposits or in deep beds, which, cut by the mountain-torrents into ditch-like ravines often more than 100 feet deep, exhibited the alternate layers of gravel and clayey or calcareous detritus of which they are formed. In crossing the branches of these mountains the primitive rocks appear. Ascending on the south side by a

pass in a hollow, ash-coloured shale was succeeded by quartz. Higher up lay gray, black, or yellow mountain-limestone veined with white,—a very common rock in Persia. Chlorite-slate, varying in colour from dark-gray to purple and blue-black, and quartz, in various shapes, composed the summit, which must have been between 6000 and 7000 feet above the level of the sea. On descending the north side, coarse-grained granite, combined with calcareous particles, was found in huge detached blocks, which at a still lower level gave way to large beds of common granite, frequently exhibiting columnar divisions. These mountains may be generally described as follows :—calcareous substances stretch along their eastern skirts ; on their southern acclivities schistose rocks appear ; clay intermingled with quartz occupies the middling and higher regions ; while granite composes the lower tracts of their northern aspects.

Traces of volcanic action are to be found in several parts of this range. The peak of Demawund, which rises full 12,000 feet above the level of the sea, is undoubtedly to be referred to that origin ; and the frequency of earthquakes, which shake and sometimes destroy the towns at their feet, indicate the widely-spread elements of subterraneous fire which exist within them.

The most interesting geological feature which occurs in the Elburz Mountains is the turquoise mines, situated about forty miles west of Nishapour. The base of the ridge where they lie is composed of white, gray, yellow, red, or brown porphyritic earth, interspersed with veins of brilliant red, disposed in hillocks, on the top of which rest beds of limestone, or porphyritic conglomerates. The mines were opened in the hill side, in beds of porphyritic earth, or in rock of the same material, deeply tinged with iron ; and of these substances in various shapes, often veined with micaeuous iron ore, the mountain appears to consist. The turquoise (or calaite of Professor Fisher) is disseminated in veins, nodules, and irregular masses, and the crude matter of the gem is often plentifully dispersed in soft and pulverulent lumps, of a pale dressy substance. It is occasionally hard and compact, but, being full of flaws, it possesses no great mercantile value. These mines are the property of the crown, and are farmed out to the best bidder.

Towards the western extremity of the Elburz range, as-

cending from Ghilan to Azerbijan, yellow splintery limestone was the first rock observed, although granite and breccia had several times been seen in the plain at the foot of the hills. Beyond this was the dark chlorite-slate. Next came a brown porphyritic rock, exposing spar-like substances on fracture, and easily decomposable. A conglomerate rock with a calcareous cement formed, so far as could be seen, the summits of all the mountains from Khalhal to Ardebil,—a distance of at least forty miles.

On the road from Ardebil to Tabriz a dark trap-rock was generally found occupying the high positions. It was occasionally porous, and as it were honeycombed by exposure, but oftener heavy, solid, and sonorous. White compact limestone is prevalent around Tabriz, and, with large tracts of gravelly hills and beds of conglomerate united by calcareous cement, composes the greater part of the country in its vicinity.

The mountains of Sahund, 40 miles south-east of Tabriz, exhibit great masses of calcareous conglomerate resting on a base of granite. Their summits are composed of porphyry, sometimes containing crystals of glossy felspar and hornblende. Some of the lower hills intervening between Sahund and Tabriz are covered with blocks and pebbles of a dark-blue rock containing calcareous matter. At the north-east corner of the Lake Shahee, or Urumeah, argillaceous sandstone and compact limestone were found, the latter containing a great many petrified shells of the pecten genus, which likewise occur in many parts contiguous to the lake.

The mineralogy of Persia may be said to be unknown. Iron is undoubtedly abundant, but is little manufactured. Copper has been discovered in Khorasan, Azerbijan,* and other places; but the disturbed state of the country, as well as the want of confidence in government, deters men of capital from working them. Lead is by no means scarce,—the mines of Fars and Kerman supply the greater part of the demand, though a certain quantity is imported from India. Antimony is also found, but little used. There are no mines of silver or gold worthy of notice. Rock-salt is plentiful all over the

* An attempt has lately been made by some English gentlemen, supported by a mercantile house in London, to work the copper mines in Azerbijan;—we have not heard with what success.

country. The mines of Khameer yield a copious supply of sulphur, which is also found in many other places; and naphtha is likewise a very common, cheap, and useful production.

The empire of Persia, as described in the preceding pages, is by the natives divided into two distinct climates, the Gur-maseer and Sirhud (warm and cold regions), and the productions of these necessarily differ from each other. The former comprehends the lower part of Beloochistan, Mekran, Kerman, and Laristan, together with the southern parts of Fars and Kuzistan; and these provinces, particularly those farthest to the east, are rich in many of the productions of India.

By Mr. Pottinger we are informed, that all the grains of Hindostan are produced in Lus, and the southern parts of Beloochistan and Mekran. Bajeree, joar (*Holcus sorgum*), moongee (*Phaseolus mungo*.) tel (*Sesamum*), maize, dâl (a vetch), oord-mutter (a sort of pea), chunna (*Cicer arietinum*), with rice, barley, and wheat, form the usual crops: cotton, indigo, sugar, and madder, are cultivated with perfect success. In addition to the chinâr or *Platanus Orientalis*, the walaut, and other trees of higher latitudes, the uphoor (a variety of *Ziziphus jujuba*), the peépul (*Ficus religiosa*), the néem (*Melia azaderachta*), the seesoo (*Dalbergia seesoo*), the mango, the guava, the orange, the lemon, the babool (*Mimosa Arábica*), and more than one species of the tamarisk, are found embellishing favoured spots, where moisture encourages vegetation. The water-courses in Mekran are filled with underwood of oleander, tamarisk, babool, and other thorny shrubs, which give harbour to a multitude of wild animals.

Among the most valuable productions of this scorching climate is the date-tree, which here, as in Arabia, seems to require the full influence of a burning sun to ripen its delicious fruit. It flourishes only in the lowest and hottest parts of the region now under our consideration.

Kelat of Beloochistan is situated in a climate which greatly resembles that of Europe, and its bazaars exhibit as various a display of fruits and vegetables as can, perhaps, be found in any quarter of the world. Apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, apples, pears, quinces, and grapes, of various and delicious kinds; figs, pomegranates, mulberries, guavas, plantains, melons, currants, cherries, almonds, walnuts, and pistachio nuts, are sold in profusion for a trifle; and the culinary vegetables, as turnips, carrots, cabbages, lettuces, cauli-

flowers, peas and beans, radishes, celery, onions, garlic, paraley, eggfruit, cucumbers, and others, yield not in excellence to those in Europe.

On ascending from the Dushtistan of Fars, by the pass of the Doochter and Peerazun, to the level of Shiraz and the region around it, we lose sight of those fruits and plants that love a warm climate. Among the trees that then attract our notice, are the stately chinar, the dark aspiring cypress, the picturesque pinaster, the tall Lombardy poplar, and the willow. The plains are covered with a stunted and prickly herbage, including the camelthorn (*Hedysarum alkaje*), the wild-liquorice, the benak or spice-plant, the soapwort, a species of wild rue, and many others. Among them the stalk of the gum-ammoniac rears itself upon most of the gravelly plains of Irak and Khorasan, dropping its bitter tears upon the waste.

The mountains between Kauzeroan and Shiraz, and those of the Buchtiarees and of Kurdistan, are in many places covered with dwarf oak; while the konar or cornel-bush (the corrundah of Hindostan), with the wild or bitter almond, are scattered over their rocky sides, and on the little plains that lie imbosomed among them.

Though the orchards of Persia are rich in all the fruits of Europe, the timber-trees of the great central tracts are chiefly limited to the chinar, Lombardy poplar (*Persicæ seifidæ*), a bushy species of elm, the common and the sweet-scented willow named singid, and a few pinasters. Walnut-trees grow everywhere to a magnificent size: but the cypress does not thrive in the colder provinces. Cotton, tobacco, the opium-poppy, vines and figs, as well as the mulberry, are to be found all over the country. The *Palma Christi* is chiefly confined to the warmer provinces. Two sorts of tamarisk, including that which yields the gezungabeen or manna, appear in moist and low spots.

Among the most valuable and remarkable productions of the eastern parts of this country, is the *asafetida* plant, which abounds in some parts of Khorasan, in Beloochustan, and Afghanistan. Its stem is from one to two and a half feet in height; the leaves resemble those of the Indian beet-root; and when ripe it produces a cauliflower-like head of a light straw colour. The milky juice extracted near the root congeals into the well-known gum, of which each plant yields about

a pound ; but the plants themselves, especially when young, are prized as a high delicacy by the natives, who stew or roast the stem, and boil or fry the head and leaves with clarified butter. In this way its smell is even stronger and more rank than when in the form of a drug, and none but those accustomed to it can endure its offensive effluvia.

The low-lying provinces upon the banks of the Caspian Sea afford a prodigal display of the riches of the vegetable world ; but although it is a sight to feast the eye which has been seared by long dwelling on the brown plains of Upper Persia, it probably affords few materials for botanical research, as the productions are principally those already well-known in Europe. The hills are covered with oak, elm, sycamore, beech, ash, walnut, and box-wood ; and the marshes and flats which skirt the mountain-foot display, besides a noble growth of magnificent alder, several varieties of poplar and willow. At the same time every species of European fruit-tree is found growing in wild luxuriance, mingled with impervious thickets of wild-pomegranate, plum, blackthorn, raspberry, bramble, and other stubborn bushes, interlaced with various creeping plants, all of which in spring are covered with a sheet of the loveliest blossom. In these more favoured climes the orange and the lime again are found enriching the gardens of the great, and the sombre cypress rears its picturesque yet formal shape, although sometimes sadly pinched and broken down by a severe snow-storm. Wild-vines hang in graceful festoons from bough to bough, mantling up the gigantic trees ; while beneath them, wherever the swamp does not stretch its stagnant waters, the eye is refreshed by a carpet of the richest verdure, enamelled with the loveliest flowers.

Among the flowers of Persia, the rose, in many varieties and in boundless profusion, asserts the first rank. Beds of tulips, anemones, ranunculus, lilies, jonquils, narcissuses, hyacinths, the lily of the valley, pinks, gilliflowers, sunflowers, marigolds, jessaines, and violets, embellish the gardens or the fields ; and even the hard gravel, of which the greater part of the extensive plain consists, is tinged in spring with lovely hues by the blossoms, chiefly of bulbous-rooted plants, that start in perfect sheets, without leaf or stem, from the seemingly impenetrable soil.

Such is a very general summary of the vegetable produc-

tions of Persia. In the animal kingdom we also recognise many of those genera and species which are common to other parts of Asia and Europe. In truth, with the exception of the camel, the domestic animals of the region we have been describing are, with no very material varieties, the same as those in our own quarter of the globe ; namely, the horse, the ass, the mule, the camel, the cow, the buffalo, the sheep, the goat, and the dog.

There is no people, perhaps, who are better entitled to the appellation of "a nation of horsemen" than the Persians : and in no country, not even in England, where so much science and expense are lavished upon the stable, is greater attention paid to the management of their horses. There are various breeds in Persia ; but the most esteemed are those of the Turkoman tribes, when duly mingled with Arab blood. No one devoted more pains to the improvement of this animal than Nadir Shah. Perfectly alive to the value of the Arabian, he sent into Khorasan the finest specimens he could procure from the plains of Nejed, and the result quite equalled his expectations. The powers of endurance possessed by the Turkoman horses have already been more than once alluded to in the course of this work, as well as the modes used to train them ; and it is scarcely necessary to remark again, that the feats these animals are made to perform stand unmatched by those of the best coursers in England.* Nor are the valuable qualities of these, and the other breeds of Persian horses, confined to the animals of highest extraction ; on the contrary, it is not unfrequently found that the smaller and less noble ones,—the *yabous*, as they are called, which in this country would be held as no better than ponies or galloways,—will often do the most work, and endure the hardest labour ; and the distance to which these creatures, loaded with three cwt. and upwards, will day after day proceed over the worst roads, clambering up steep passes, and along the beds of stony torrents, is truly surprising.

The price of the finer horses in Persia varies, of course, according to size or beauty, but principally according to breed. It may be held to range from 50*l.* to 300*l.*, and

* Sir John Malcolm relates, that a horseman, mounted on a Turkoman horse, brought him a packet of letters from Shiraz to Teheran, a distance of more than 500 miles, within six days.

even 40*l.* sterling ; though none of high blood can be procured for less than 10*l.* The common horses of the country, among which some prove excellent, may be purchased at from 15*l.* to 40*l.*, and such yaboos as we have spoken of, if proved to be good workers, may be estimated at a similar value.

The Persians do not deform their horses by cutting their tails : but, by knotting them up in a peculiar manner, they shorten them, so that they do not incommodate their riders. The harness is simple, and generally plain ; the saddle, which by a European would be held as neither comfortable nor convenient, rises high above the horse's back, and is generally adorned with a demi-peak mounted in gold or silver ; the stirrup-iron on which the foot rests is sharp, and answers the purpose of a spur ; and the bridle is but a single rein attached to a powerful bit. Ornaments are often suspended under the throat and above the forehead ; while silver chains are sometimes twisted round the animal's neck. The led horses, or yedeks, which always form a principal part of a great man's retinue, have their saddles covered with very gay cloths, one of which is generally spread on the ground to sit upon.

The *ass* of Persia is, generally speaking, as poor and miserable a drudge as it is in other quarters ; but some are of a very superior size and description. The best are of Arabian descent, and sell at large prices. One of particularly fine temper and easy paces will bring as much as 40*l.* sterling. They are generally preferred by the priesthood ; and the higher orders of that body may be seen pacing soberly along, blessing the people on either hand, and receiving in turn the most profound obeisances.

Perhaps there is no animal more remarkable for power of endurance than the mules of Persia. They seldom attain a large size, but their strength is prodigious. The loads they usually carry are about three cwt., with which they travel day after day along the execrable roads and over the rough *coulées* of the country (still preserving their condition), at the rate of from twenty-five to fifty miles a day, according to the distance of the resting-places. The writer of these pages saw three of these creatures just taken off grass, where they had been for a considerable time unworked, and sent off heavily laden from Kauzeroun to Shiraz, a distance

of fifty-seven miles, including two of the worst cothuls in the kingdom. They performed this journey with only one halt of five or six hours, the latter stage, extending to more than forty miles, being completed without a stop. It is remarkable that the muleteers never remove the packsaddles from these animals except to clean and curry them. If the back is galled, they remove a part of the stuffing from above the tender spot, and then replace the load as before ; finding by experience that such sores, unless healed under the saddle, are apt to break out again. The price of good baggage-mules may vary from 20*l.* to 30*l.* sterling.

There are three sorts of camels used in Persia ; those having one hump, those with two, and a third produced by the union of these varieties ; which last are esteemed stronger, more docile and patient than either of the parents, and for that reason greatly preferred. These animals are low in proportion to their bulk, have short stout bony legs, are of remarkable breadth, and carry a great quantity of shaggy hair upon their necks, shoulders, haunches, and on the crown of the head. They are not permitted to breed ; as the progeny, instead of inheriting the gentle qualities of their parents, are said to be extremely vicious. These animals carry from 700 to 1100 lbs. English, and have a wonderful faculty of enduring fatigue, hunger, and thirst ; their selling price varies from 10*l.* to 15*l.* apiece.

The cow and sheep of Persia require no particular notice. The breeds of the first are neither distinguished for size nor beauty : those to the eastward exhibit more or less of the Indian hump, as they have been more or less crossed with the animals of that country. The sheep are principally of the fat-tailed sort ; and it is remarkable that, although they constitute one chief source of the wealth and property of a very large class of the inhabitants, no attention whatever is paid to their improvement. Their flesh is generally excellent, and forms the chief part of the animal food used in the country.

The dog in Persia, notwithstanding some superstitious restrictions, becomes, as elsewhere, the companion and assistant of man. Surrounded by nations of thieves, it would be impossible for a camp or village to preserve its property a single night without these vigilant guards ; and, accordingly, most tribes and hamlets provide themselves with a

breed of large ones, which are so fierce and watchful that none can approach the precincts guarded by them without causing alarm. The species employed are various, but all appear to be descendants of the mastiff and shepherd's dog, probably with some cross of the wolf. Besides these the Persians rear a kind of greyhound, with which they course antelopes, foxes, and hares. They have generally long silken hair upon their quarters, shoulders, ears, and tail. In some places, too, there is a description of pointer, which is trained to find the game by scent, and to catch it on the ground. These vary in their appearance, but some resemble the slender breeds of our own smooth class.

Persia, generally speaking, is too open and too barren to be very largely stocked with wild animals ; yet it cannot be charged with a deficiency of game, either as regards quality or variety. The lion itself is to be found on the plains of Kuzistan, on the banks of the Tigris, in many parts of Far, in Beloochistan, occasionally in Mazunderan, and probably in many other parts of the countries under consideration. It is smaller than that of Africa, and rather resembles the native of India. Tigers are rare ; leopards, chittahs or hunting-leopards, tigercats, lynxes, and bears, are more numerous. Hyenas, wolves, jackals, foxes, abound everywhere : of the latter, some are occasionally seen white, or of a silver-gray. Mr. Pottinger mentions wild dogs in Beloochistan, that hunt in packs of twenty or thirty together, and which have been known to run down and kill a bullock in twenty minutes. Jerboas swarm in the deserts. Antelopes are abundant in most parts, and several sorts of deer occur in various places. In Beloochistan we are informed that red-deer are frequent ; the *gour-khur* or wild ass, is scattered, though more rarely, over all the plains and rocky recesses of the country, particularly in the deserts of Khorasan and the extensive valleys of Fars and Irak. This animal, the favourite game of the Persian kings and khans, is from ten to twelve hands high, having a smooth skin covered with reddish hair, except on the hinder parts and belly, which are of a silvery gray ; the mane and tuft at the end of its tail are black, its head and ears are large, but the legs are slender and formed for that speed for which the animal is so remarkable.

The wild hog is another animal found abundantly in many

parts, particularly in swampy and wooded places ; and, although not eaten, is often made the object of sport. The porcupine and mangousti are frequent, and the mongoose is enumerated among the animals of Beloochistan. Hares are met with everywhere, and several species of the ferret or weasel also occur ; as do rats, mice, and bats, in the usual abundance,—the latter, indeed, swarm in all ruins and caverns. The Persian cat, with its silky hair, is a well-known favourite with those who are fond of such domestic inmates.

Two of the most interesting creatures to be met with in those countries are the *booz* or *pazun* (the mountain-goat), and the *argali*, or mountain-sheep. The male of the latter is magnificent, portly, bold, and very strong, resembling a lion in the neck and shoulders, which are covered with a reddish hair that curls closely around the fore-quarters. He is armed with a pair of immense horns, crooked and twisted.

As birds of prey may be enumerated eagles, vultures, hawks, and falcons of several sorts, with kites and crows in abundance ; and Mr. Pottinger mentions that he observed magpies at Kelat of Beloochistan. Among winged game are bustards, termed by the Persians *shoobarfas*, together with a smaller species of the same bird, red-legged and common gray partridges, with a smaller sort rather resembling the quail. The *towee* or desert-partridge, also called *bogra kara* from its black breast, abounds in all the plains. Pheasants, called *karagoul*, are numerous in Mazunderan and Astrabad. Storks, herons, wild ducks, plovers, and lapwings, snipes, and divers, occur in spots suited to their respective habits. Pelicans are seen in the wilderness ; cormorants, curlews, and other sea-fowl, frequent the shores of the gulf, and, with sea-eagles and other species, are most abundant on the banks of the Caspian Sea. The forests which fringe that sheet of brackish water, are vocal with a variety of those singing-birds common to Europe ; among which it would be unpardonable to omit the blackbird, the thrush, and the nightingale, which delight the ear with their evening song from the thickets of roses that embellish every garden *

* Mortier mentions having seen a white swallow at Bushire.

Of fish, in a country which possesses so few rivers, we are not to look for either abundance or variety; nor do the inhabitants make any great use of what they have. The shores of the Gulf are well supplied, it is true; and the people of Mekran still merit the name of Ichthyophagi, applied to them of old. The Caspian Sea also seems simply stocked with various sorts; but little use is made by those who inhabit its shores of this bountiful provision of nature. The rivers which flow into it abound with sturgeon and sterlet, which are cured for the Russian market;* and salmon and herring are taken in abundance in the Bay of Salian, and on the western shore. Several other species occur; but they are seldom seen in the towns near which they are caught. The Lake Zerrah in Seistan is likewise said to abound in fish; but we have no information regarding the species. Trout are found in several of the streams of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. But the most remarkable zoological fact connected with the subject is, that the subterraneous aqueducts formed by art, and which, originating in springs thus brought to light, are exhausted in irrigating the surface of the land, are yet frequently found to swarm with a species of leather-mouthed and bearded fish, which grows to a considerable size. The natives make no use of them, and of course cannot be supposed to have used any means for introducing the breed. They are perfectly wholesome and well tasted, but of no great delicacy.

Persia is generally but little infested by reptiles or troublesome insects; though there are some curious exceptions. The poisonous bug of Miana and the black scorpion of Cashan are notorious for their destructive qualities. Tarantulas and overgrown spiders, said to be venomous, are also seen; and large wasps and multitudes of mosquitoes invade the low and swampy provinces; while clouds of locusts occasionally brood over the hotter regions, destroying every green thing,—themselves supplying to myriads of wild-fowl, as well as to the hungry Arab of the desert, a dainty

* The writer of this has seen these fish lying in thousands upon the banks of the Sufieldrood in Ghilan, having been caught by the Russian fishers merely for the caviare and isinglass; after extracting which, the carcasses were thrown away to rot, and tainted the air to a great distance round.

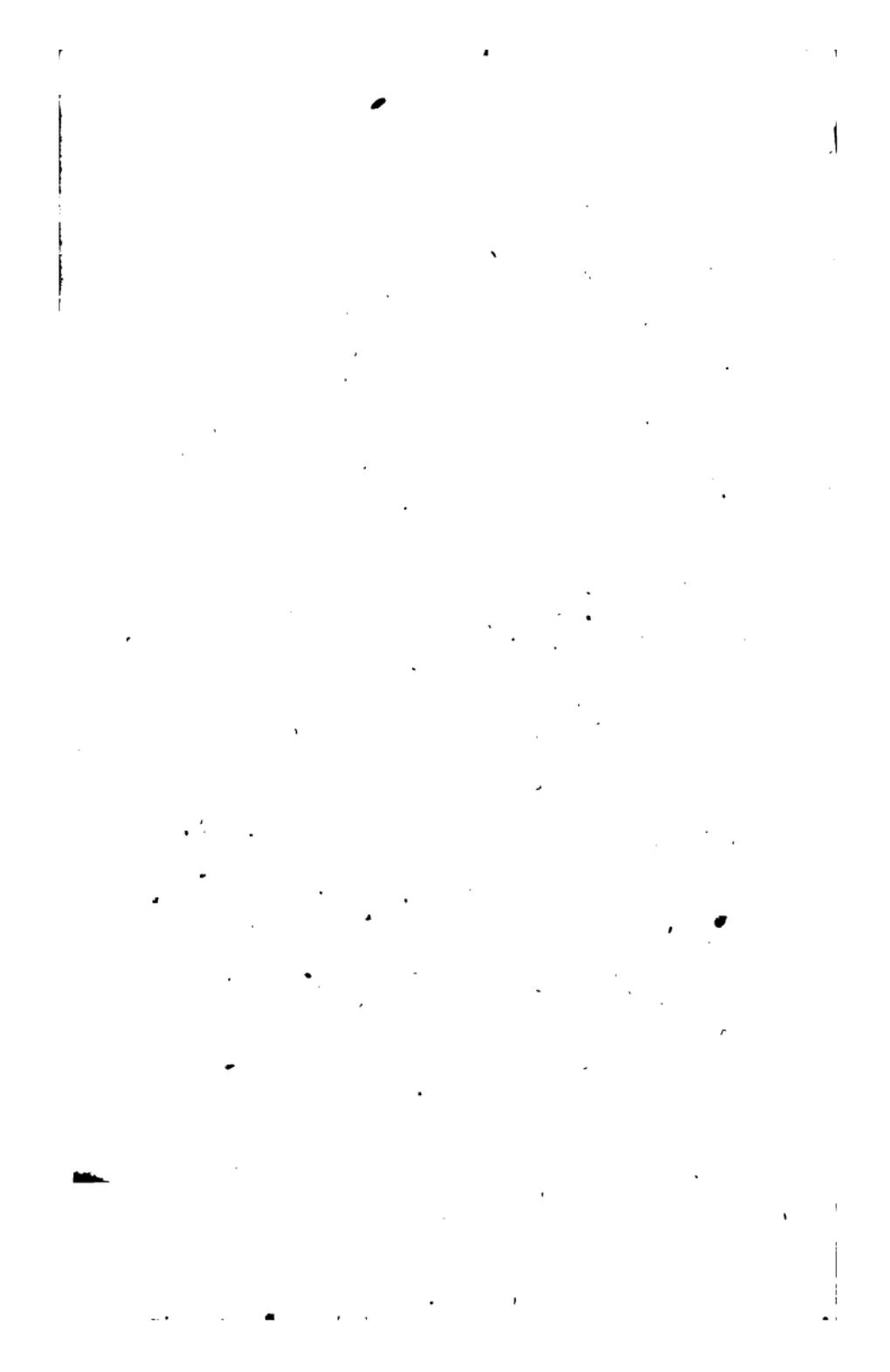
meal.* Fresh-water tortoises are numerous about the Bundermeer River and in many other places, but are never used as food ; and water-serpents were also seen by Sir W. Ouseley in the same stream. Snakes of various sorts, principally innocuous, occur in all parts of the country, and numbers of beautiful lizards frequent the ruinous buildings, gambolling among the herbage that mantles and withers around them.

* There are two kinds of locusts, one of which is termed lawful, and the other unlawful ; the former, boiled with a little salt and butter, or fat, is said to eat like a shrimp or lobster somewhat stale.

THE END.







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